



# **HOW CHINA SEES THE WORLD IN 2024**

A survey on Chinese citizens' perception of China's international roles and views on major global jurisdictions

## **Chinese Citizens' Global Perception Survey (CCGPS)**

*How China Sees the World in 2024*

May 2024

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*Report by*

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# FOREWORD

Dear Reader,

It is my great pleasure to introduce this year's *How China sees the World* survey.

This survey offers a rare opportunity to garner insights into Chinese citizens' perceptions of international affairs, and of the role China should play therein. It also serves as a counterpoint to other regional attitudinal surveys, offering clues as to which countries Chinese citizens view either as most relevant on the international scene, or indeed as most desirable potential partners for China.

The breadth and depth of information that flows from this exercise means that the survey will be of interest not only to scholars and researchers, but also to policymakers and interested members of the general public, helping to inform understanding of contemporary Chinese society as well as some of the internal drivers of its future foreign policy direction.

The fact that this is the second iteration of this exercise also allows us the luxury of having a baseline from which to elucidate potentially new and emerging trends, including the perceived increase in influence of so-called Global South actors, and the on-going evolution of Chinese citizen's perceptions of China's relations with the U.S., Russia, India, and other powers. At a time where much attention is being paid to the positioning of third countries vis-à-vis an emerging great power rivalry between the U.S. and China, data illustrating Chinese citizens' views of the roles and relevancy of various state actors will also be of interest.

From a Canadian perspective, some encouraging data points also emerge: despite several difficult years of bilateral relations, Chinese citizens continue to maintain a positive view of Canada, seeing it as a desirable destination for travel and study, and also deeming it to be a preferred partner for China on the international scene. Thus, it would appear that Canada's positive brand in China remains intact, possibly opening the door to greater Canadian influence and to more traction for Canadian efforts aimed at soliciting China's meaningful participation in global initiatives, notably in the areas of peace and security.

In closing, I am very grateful to Professor Reza Hasmath and to our team here at The China Institute for all the hard work that has gone on behind the scenes in order to make the results of this survey available. The China Institute also hopes that, building on this work, a third iteration of this survey will also be on offer next year.

I encourage all interested in deepening their understanding of China to have a close look at the survey's results, and very much look forward to learning from any new insights or thinking that flow from this exercise.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PR' followed by a stylized flourish.

Philippe Rheault

Director  
The China Institute  
University of Alberta

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

China's relationship with Western jurisdictions has suffered from greater bi-directional tensions in the last year. This trend is exemplified by China's tacit support for Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine, its ongoing trade disputes with the United States and European Union, disputes in the South China Sea, and its reliance on dual-use technologies to promote its military and economic advancement. These developments have led to numerous investigations of China's trade practices, particularly regarding electric vehicles, export restrictions on semiconductors and other high-end technology, and the prolonged deployment of military assets in the Indo-Pacific region.

As China's rise as a major world power marks a defining feature of the contemporary global political, economic and security landscape, it remains crucial to focus on Chinese citizens' perceptions of foreign jurisdictions and issues of global concern. Namely, the Chinese state's capacity to pursue its interests, both domestically and abroad, is intimately tied to the popular legitimacy it is granted amongst the citizenry. This ultimately means that the general public's support or dissatisfaction with China's foreign policy and activities can translate to future support or dissatisfaction with the Chinese government itself.

This report discusses the findings from the second iteration of the Chinese Citizens' Global Perception Survey (CCGPS). CCGPS 2024 is an online and telephone national survey conducted by the authors, in cooperation with a survey firm in mainland China, in the first quarter of 2024. It provides a demographically representative and statistically valid, candid account of how the Chinese general public view other nations and their relationships with China. CCGPS 2024 examined mainland Chinese citizens' perspectives on China's current relations with global actors, including Australia, Canada, the EU, France, Germany, India, Japan, Russia, the UK and the US. This report discusses the survey findings in five areas: (1) Chinese citizens' general global perception; (2) China's global roles; (3) foreign tourism, study, work and emigration preferences; (4) Canada-China relations; and, (5) Chinese citizens' sources and knowledge of global jurisdictions.

The CCGPS 2024 data suggests that the Chinese public perceives that China and the United States were most likely to be ranked the world's two most influential powers, followed by Russia and the EU. Japan, India, and Australia were regarded as being amongst the least influential. Trust levels also varied, with Russia viewed as the most trustworthy nation, and Japan the least.

The data suggests that the Chinese public supports an active global role for China across multiple spheres of international engagement. Respondents expressed a strong desire for

China to take a global leadership role in peace and security and technology and innovation. There is moderate support for Chinese global leadership in poverty alleviation, international trade and environmental governance.

Despite controversies surrounding Chinese students in UK universities, the UK remains a popular destination for Chinese students seeking to study abroad. Canada was on par with Australia and Germany as a moderately attractive educational destination. Russia was perceived as both an attractive study and tourism destination, highlighting the strength of its bilateral ties to China.

Respondents generally favoured expanding ties with Canada with the strongest support for cooperation in areas of peace and security, and cultural exchanges. However, economic and business relationships, and environmental and climate change initiatives, garnered slightly weaker support. Additionally, respondents viewed China's growing power, and Canada's close relationship with the US, as having a strong influence on China-Canada relations.

CCGPS 2024 suggests that Chinese citizens increasingly rely on social media over state media to learn about global jurisdictions. Additionally, respondents generally perceived that the government's actions reflect the popular will.

This report offers observations and insights into the Chinese public views on global relations, and the factors that shape these perceptions. In the same breath, the report points to critical nuances that fashion a greater understanding behind the complexities of everyday Chinese citizens' thinking. The goal of the report is to provide evidence, rooted in timely data, that can aid key stakeholders to develop targeted and considered strategies for enlightened and productive engagement with mainland China.



# KEY FINDINGS

## **PART I:** GENERAL GLOBAL PERCEPTION

- Chinese citizens perceive China as the most influential global actor, followed closely by the United States, Russia and the EU. Japan, India and Australia were regarded as being amongst the least influential.
- Russia is considered to be the most trusted and important nation to China's long-term future. Japan and the United States were perceived to be the least trustworthy, with the former being viewed as the least important nation for China's future.
- Respondents perceive the United States as the actor most likely to engage in military conflict with China. Albeit, this perception does not extend to US-allied nations such as Australia, Canada and the UK. Russia is viewed as the least likely nation to engage in a future military conflict with China.

## **PART II:** CHINA'S GLOBAL ROLES

- Chinese citizens want the People's Republic of China to take a more active international engagement role. This is a consistent trend across socio-economic lines. The most favourable areas for Chinese global leadership are peace and security, followed by technology and innovation.
- While the Chinese public does not favour decoupling economic and technological ties with Western jurisdictions, there is relatively limited support for expanding technological and economic ties.
- There is a strong and widespread consensus regarding the importance of expanding economic and technological ties with Russia.

# KEY FINDINGS

## PART III: TOURISM, STUDY, WORK & EMIGRATION PREFERENCES

- Despite strained relations with China, Western jurisdictions remain popular destinations for studying, tourism and emigration.
- Respondents have highly favourable views of Russia as a destination for travel, work, and study, although they express less interest in emigration.
- The United Kingdom is the most popular destination for studying abroad, followed closely by Russia, Germany, Australia, and Canada.

## PART IV: CANADA & CHINA RELATIONS

- The Chinese public favours expanding ties with Canada, notably in global/regional peace and security initiatives, and cultural exchanges. This was consistently the case in the 2023 iteration of the survey.
- Most Chinese citizens do not believe that Canadians have a good understanding of China.
- The factors that have the greatest impact on Canada-China relations were China's growing power and Canada's close relationship with the United States. Cultural and value differences, and Canada's domestic and foreign policies, are seen to play a lesser role.

## PART V: SOURCES & KNOWLEDGE OF GLOBAL JURISDICTIONS

- Chinese citizens are more likely to rely on social media than state media (TV, radio, and newspapers) to learn about global jurisdictions. This was consistently the case in the 2023 version of the survey.
- Respondents were highly knowledgeable about the US, Japan and Russia, and less knowledgeable about Canada, Australia and the EU.
- Self-reported higher levels of knowledge of a jurisdiction correlated with higher levels of in said jurisdiction.

## PART I

# GENERAL GLOBAL PERCEPTION

*To gauge Chinese citizens' general perception of global powers' influence, trustworthiness, importance to China and the potential likelihood of military conflict with China, CCGPS 2024 asked a few direct pointed queries.*

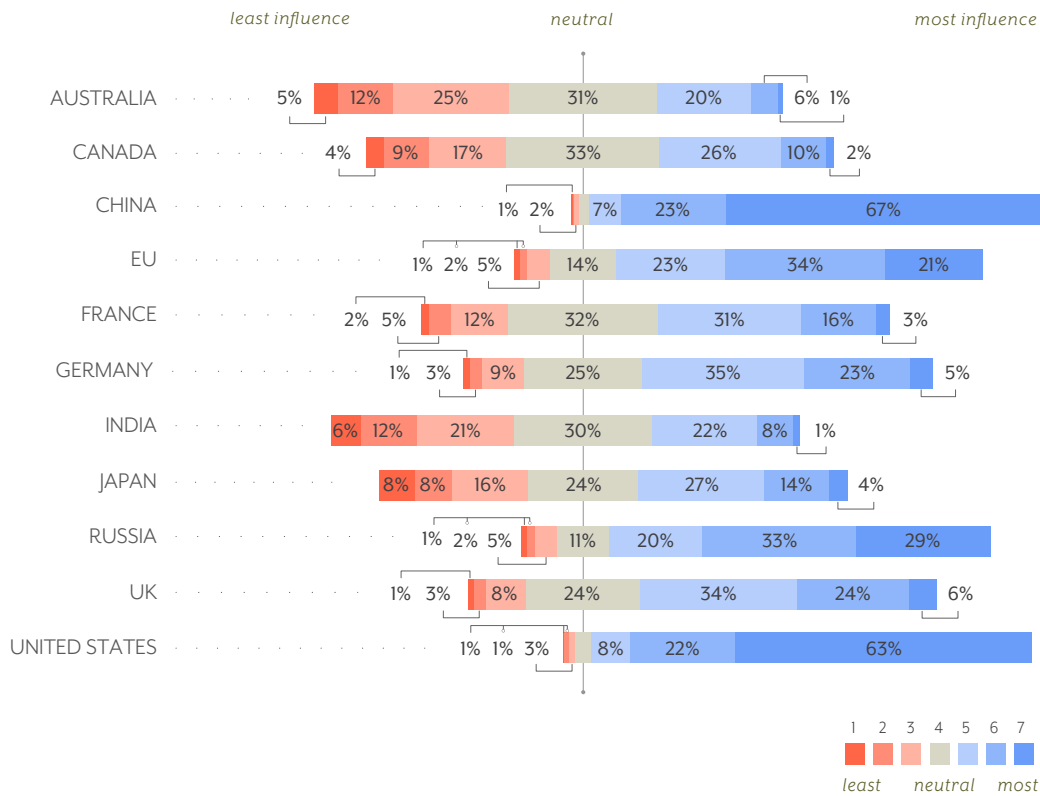
## A. WHO HAS THE MOST GLOBAL INFLUENCE?

Foremost, Chinese citizens strongly indicated that China was the world's most powerful nation, with nearly 70 percent of respondents rating it as the nation with the most influence on the world stage. This is a result that cuts across income and education levels. The second most influential nation was the United States (63 percent), followed by Russia (29 percent) and the EU (21 percent). In sharp contrast, 1 percent of respondents believe that Australia is an influential nation, a notable trend given Canberra's role within the Five Eyes intelligence alliance, and the AUKUS security alliance.

While India is seen as one of the least influential nations, its influence has slightly increased in relative to last year's results on the margins. In 2023, 15 percent of respondents perceived India as above a neutral score, and in 2024, 32 percent saw India as above a neutral score. This trend was particularly pronounced amongst higher-income respondents, self-identified Communist Party of China (CPC) members, and those living in more urban settings, all of whom perceived India as being significantly influential on the world stage. This rise in India's perceived status may be the result of its hosting of the G20 Summit, its burgeoning economy, and its growing naval strength.<sup>1</sup>

Chinese citizens perceived Canada as holding a marginal position of influence within the international community, whereby 30 percent of respondents viewed Canada as holding little or limited influence (defined as an aggregated score below 4). Albeit 38 percent perceived Canada as being somewhat or significantly influential in the international community. These findings are similar to those of the 2023 CCGPS, which indicated that 42 percent of respondents viewed Canada as holding little or limited influence (aggregated score below 4) and 26 percent perceiving Canada as being somewhat or significantly influential on the global stage.

**FIGURE 1.A - PERCEPTION OF GLOBAL INFLUENCE**



## B. TRUST IN GLOBAL PARTNERS

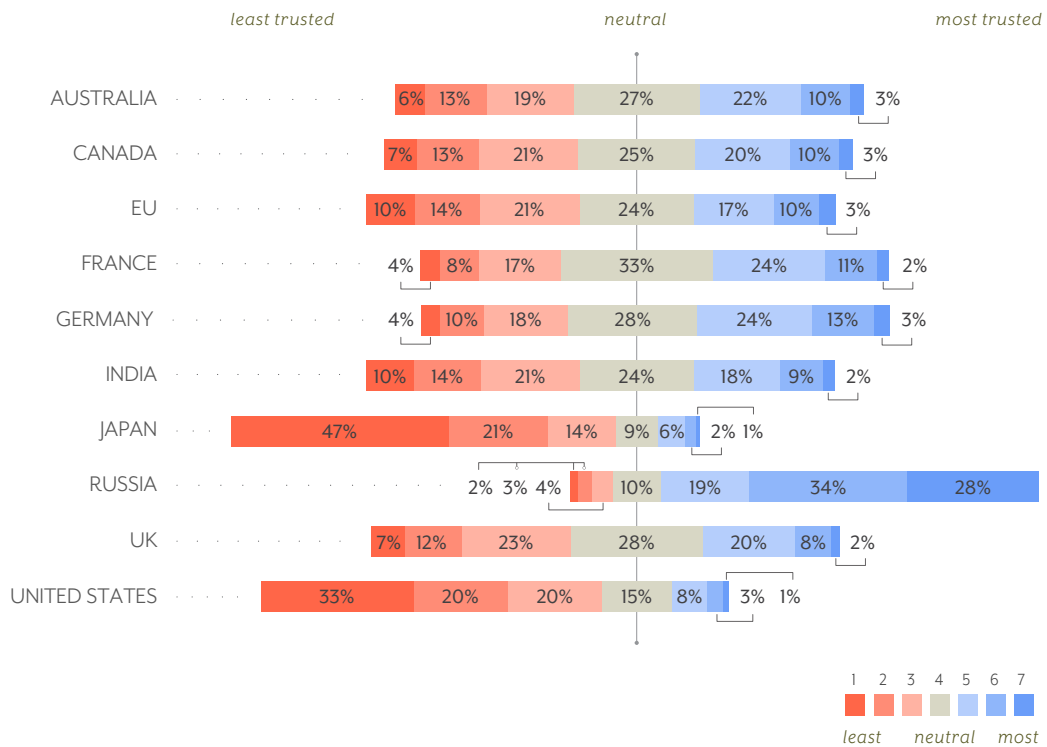
Despite the continuation of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Chinese citizens continue to perceive Russia as its most trusted global partner; a status it held in 2023 as well (see Appendix for further discussion). Over 81 percent of respondents expressed high levels of trust (defined as an aggregated score above 4) with Moscow. This trend was particularly apparent amongst highly educated and high-income respondents (mean of 5.70) older age cohorts (mean of 5.46), and self-identified CPC members (mean of 5.68). However, despite these high trust levels, it is notable that respondents' opinions on Russia appeared more divided in 2024 than in 2023 (variance of 1.96 and 1.85, respectively), suggesting a lack of unity in Chinese citizens' views towards their bordering neighbour.

In contrast, both Japan and the United States had the lowest levels of trustworthiness, in line with last year's findings. Nearly half of respondents (47 percent) expressed minimal trust (score of 1) in Japan, compared to 34 percent in 2023, indicating a continuation of historical tensions and antipathy.

The United States garnered little trust from the Chinese public, with a third of respondents expressing limited or no trust. However, CPC members (mean of 2.74), high-income earners (mean of 3.14), and highly educated respondents (mean of 3.05) were more likely to express higher trust in the US, indicating a potential division within the Chinese public along socio-economic lines.

Canada is perceived as generally trustworthy by Chinese citizens, with a third of respondents expressed somewhat or a great deal of trust (scored above 4) in Canada. This is perhaps slightly surprising in light of recent tensions between Ottawa and Beijing regarding allegations of foreign interference in Canadian federal elections, though the results from this year’s iteration of the survey echo last year’s findings.

**FIGURE 1.B - TRUST IN GLOBAL PARTNERS**



## C. IMPORTANCE OF GLOBAL RELATIONSHIPS FOR CHINA'S LONG-TERM FUTURE

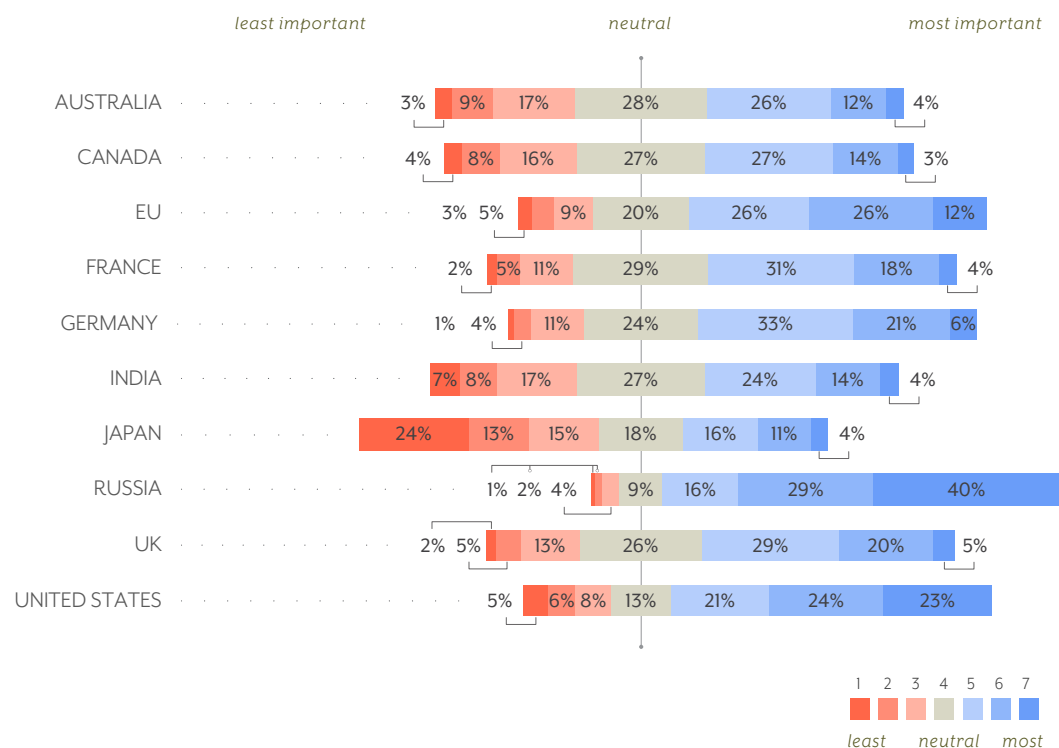
When asked to evaluate the importance of China's relationship with various jurisdictions for China's long-term future, a substantial 75 percent of citizens rated China's ties with Russia as an important foreign relationship (score above 4). This trend is even more pronounced amongst highly educated, high-income respondents (means of 6.1 and 6.07, respectively), and self-identified members of the CPC (mean of 5.98).

Following closely behind is the United States, with 68 percent of respondents rating it as China's most important relationship for its long-term future (score above 4). This is despite both jurisdictions' rivalry continues to define the current geopolitical atmosphere.

Perceptions towards Canada's relationship with China appear slightly more balanced, with only 44 percent of respondents viewing the relationship as somewhat or highly important (aggregated score above 4).

Conversely, Japan received low levels of endorsement, with nearly 31 percent (aggregated score above 4) seeing Tokyo as an important actor for China's long-term future. These findings indicate a notable lack of perceived importance of China's relationship with Japan for its long-term future, highlighting potential tensions and historical challenges in their bilateral relations.

**FIGURE 1.C - PERCEPTION OF JURISDICTIONS' LONG-TERM IMPORTANCE TO CHINA**



## D. LIKELIHOOD OF MILITARY CONFLICT IN THE NEXT DECADE

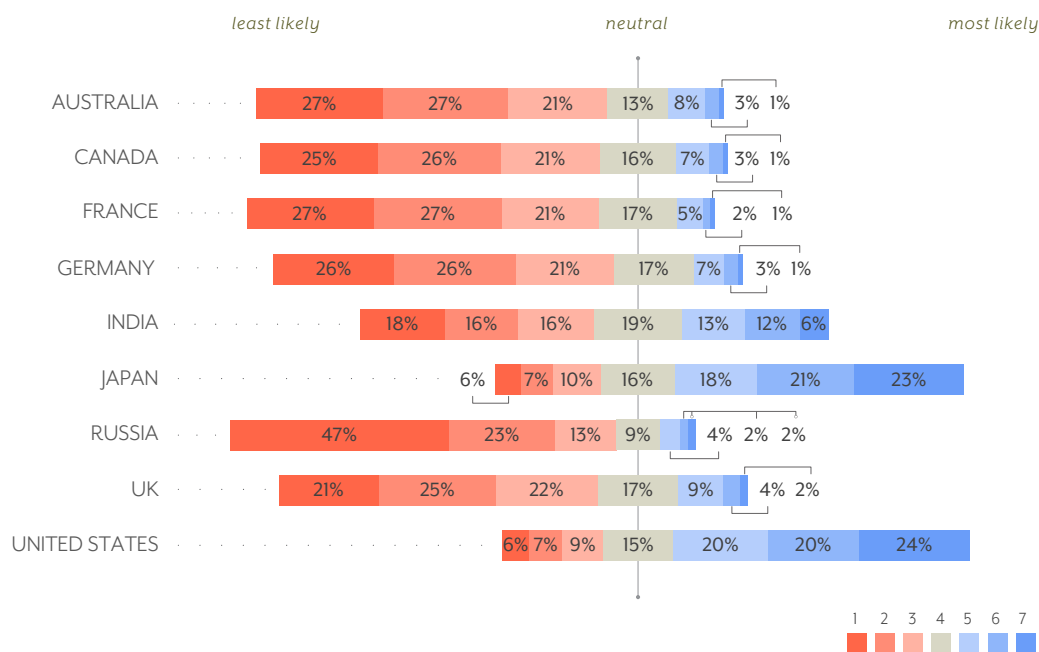
Chinese respondents perceive the possibility of conflict with Russia and France in the next decade as particularly unlikely. Only 8 percent of respondents (score above 4) indicated that a conflict with Russia is highly likely in the next decade, aligning with the scores given to France. Despite recent documents revealing Russia's contingency plans for a potential Chinese invasion, nearly half of respondents (47 percent) are adamant that Russia is not at all likely to engage in a military conflict with China in the next decade (score 1).<sup>2</sup>

Interestingly, despite growing political tensions and ongoing border disputes, 50 percent of respondents (aggregated score below 4) believe a conflict between China and India is unlikely over the course of the next decade.<sup>3</sup> This is nearly identical to the 2023 iteration of the survey, in which 53 percent of respondents rated a conflict between India and China as unlikely in the next decade.

Given US-China tensions in the 2020s, it is not surprising to see 64 percent of respondents (aggregated score above 4) viewing a conflict between China and the United States as inevitable over the next decade. These findings largely cut across educational and income levels, though urban residents are slightly less inclined than rural residents to perceive a future conflict with the US as likely over the coming decade (means of 4.88 and 5.09, respectively).

Notably, however, respondents rated the possibility of conflict with other Western jurisdictions as unlikely, suggesting a general consensus that only the US is viewed as a potential belligerent in the foreseeable future. This reflects a nuanced assessment of global geopolitical dynamics amongst the Chinese public, who expressed varying degrees of optimism and apprehension about different jurisdictions' involvement in military conflict.

**FIGURE 1.D - PERCEPTION OF THE LIKELIHOOD OF MILITARY CONFLICT**



## PART II

# CHINA'S GLOBAL ROLES



*CCGPS 2024 queried citizens about what issues China should take an active international leadership role. This is an important facet to gauge since citizen's support for varying global roles is one key determinant to understand and predict the Chinese state's behaviour.*

## A. GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

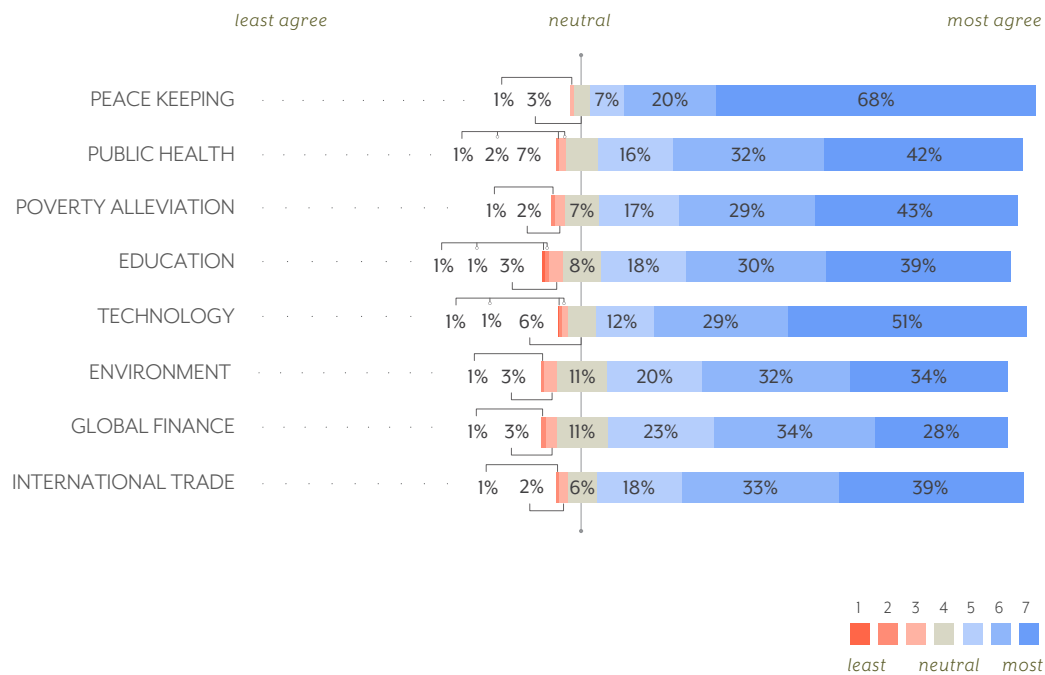
Top of the list, Chinese citizens want China to take a global leadership role in peacekeeping (95 percent reported a score above 4). With Western jurisdictions having a lesser appetite to engage in global peacekeeping missions – Canada included<sup>4</sup> – Chinese citizens want China to take up the mantle and assume stewardship of global security in the developing world. This strategy also has the added benefit of challenging – or at the very least influencing – global institutional action; and can be favourable to many Chinese who see global institutions as Western-dominated.

As China's status as a technologically advanced nation continues to grow, particularly in the midst of the machine learning boom and the 'green economy' transition, technology remains an important issue for the Chinese public (92 percent of respondents rated an aggregated score above 4).<sup>5</sup>

91 percent of respondents ranked public health as a somewhat or very important issue (aggregated score above 4), which highlights both the easing of public discontent towards China's zero-Covid policy, and China's contributions to the global healthcare infrastructure.<sup>6</sup> This trend also echoes findings from the 2023 CCGPS in which respondents rated most other jurisdictions' (e.g. USA, India and Japan) handling of the COVID-19 pandemic as poor.



**FIGURE 2.A - WHICH ISSUES AREAS SHOULD CHINA TAKE AN ACTIVE GLOBAL LEADERSHIP ROLE?**



## B. ECONOMIC COOPERATION

For the majority of Western jurisdictions, the proliferation of policies aimed at reducing Chinese involvement in supply and value chains, public and private organizations, and extractive industries have intensified debates surrounding the extent of economic cooperation with China. This trend underscores growing scrutiny and concerns over Chinese influence in key economic sectors, prompting a reassessment of collaborative ventures.

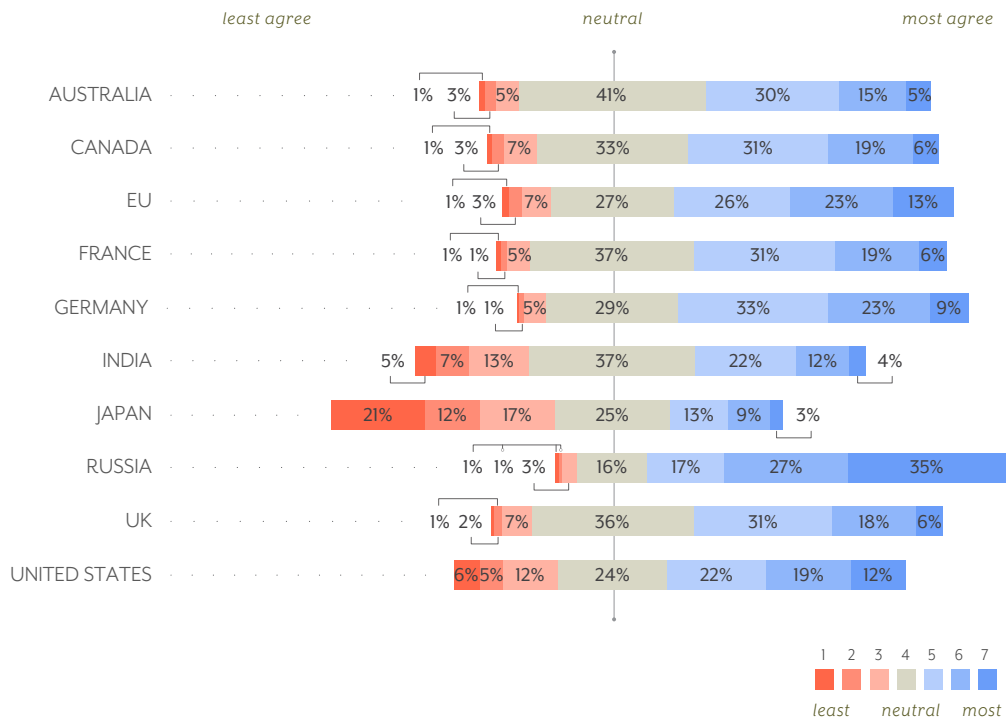
Despite facing challenges arising from Western sanctions, Russia notably maintained its leading position as China's top economic partner. Over one-third (35 percent) of respondents indicated that China should strongly expand its economic ties with Russia (score of 7), marking a slight increase from the previous year's 29 percent. Moreover, support for expanding economic ties with Russia appears to be concentrated amongst China's elites, including those residing in urban settings (mean of 5.88), and those with higher levels of education (mean of 5.67). Collectively, these trends suggest a degree of resilience in bilateral relations between China and Russia, potentially driven by shared strategic interests and geopolitical alignments.

Chinese citizens view on whether to limit or expand economic cooperation with Canada remains virtually unchanged from the previous year. In 2024, 55 percent of respondents indicated that China should somewhat or greatly expand its economic cooperation with

Canada (aggregated score over 4), while in 2023, 56 percent of respondents felt the same. This suggests a general sentiment of goodwill for both nations' economic relations, with few respondents expressing outright opposition to such endeavours.

In contrast, Japan continues to face a significant level of skepticism from Chinese respondents regarding economic cooperation. Half of the respondents expressed an interest in somewhat or strongly limited economic cooperation with Japan – measured by an aggregated rating below 4 – reflecting a prevailing negative perception towards China's Pacific neighbour in economic matters. These findings underscore enduring tensions and reservations surrounding economic engagement with Japan within the Chinese populace.

**FIGURE 2.B - SHOULD CHINA LIMIT OR EXPAND ECONOMIC COOPERATION?**



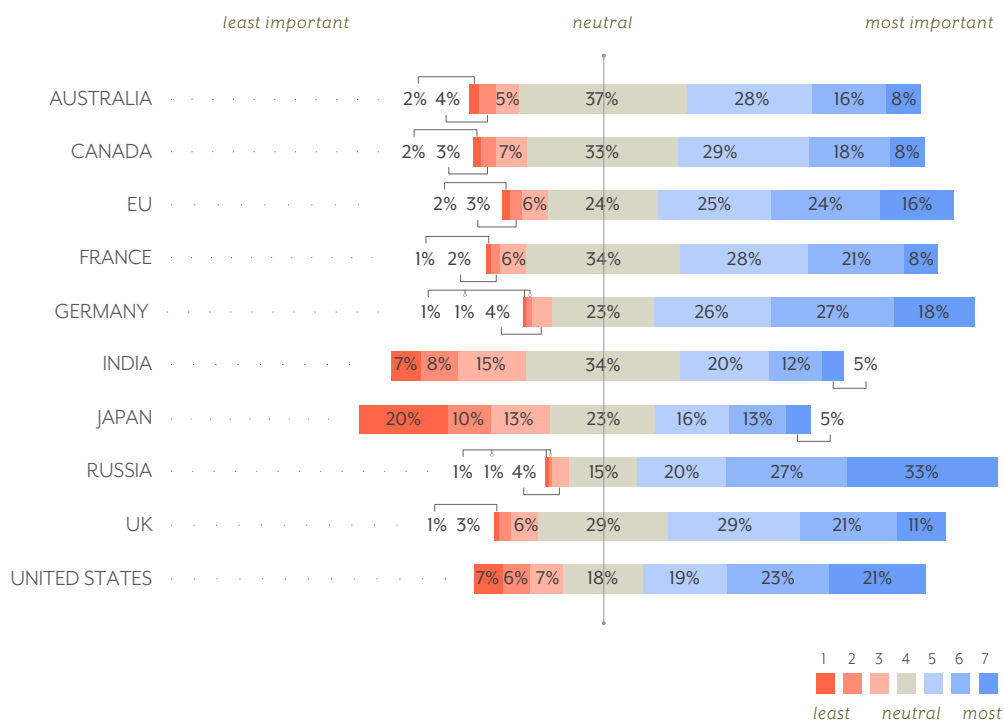
## C. TECHNOLOGICAL AND RESEARCH COLLABORATION

Collaboration on technology and research has been a contentious issue between China and Western jurisdictions, marked by ongoing tensions and regulatory actions. Notably, the US government continues to expand its list of sanctioned Chinese tech firms, with a particular focus on semiconductors, artificial intelligence and biotechnology.<sup>7</sup> This reflects broader efforts by the US to secure its semiconductor capabilities and push its allies to follow suit, underscoring the strategic importance of this sector in the geopolitical landscape.

Despite these developments, respondents exhibited a generally positive disposition towards the US when queried about the extent to which China should limit or encourage collaboration in high-tech and research fields, with 63 percent of respondents expressing interest in somewhat or greatly (aggregated score above 4) expanding technological cooperation with the US.

However, despite these positive results, opinions on whether to expand cooperation with the US displayed high degrees of variation, with support for expanding cooperation appearing to be concentrated amongst higher-income, more educated respondents (means of 5.21 and 5.28, respectively), and self-identified CPC members (mean of 5.02). These trends underscore the complexity and multifaceted nature of attitudes towards high-tech collaboration.

**FIGURE 2.C - SHOULD CHINA LIMIT OR EXPAND TECHNOLOGICAL AND RESEARCH COLLABORATION?**



Canada's standing in research and technology collaboration with China remained relatively unchanged from the previous year. In 2024, 54 percent of respondents (with an aggregated score above 4) supported greater cooperation between the two nations, a slight decrease from 58 percent in 2023. This is notable given Canada's recent efforts to safeguard its high-tech research and development sectors from perceived Chinese interference; an action that may influence the Chinese public's perception of Canada's openness to research collaboration in the coming years.<sup>8</sup>

## D. ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHINA'S GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

There is an apparent nuanced perspective amongst Chinese citizens attitudes towards China's global engagement. Statements such as "China should concentrate more on domestic affairs than on global matters" and "China is currently too open to foreign influence and thinking" were largely unpopular, with roughly 45 percent of respondents expressing their disagreement (an aggregated score below 4) with such sentiments. This suggests that despite prevalent domestic concerns related to China's macroeconomic performance, and the CPC rhetoric regarding national security, Chinese citizens remain interested in contributing to global matters and engaging with the international community.<sup>9</sup>

The statement that received the most positive responses pertains to enhancing China's global military presence to bolster national security, with 68 percent of respondents expressing general agreement (aggregated score above 4), and 22 percent of this cohort expressing the strongest agreement (score of 7). This opinion was widely held across education (mean of 6.48) and income levels (mean of 6.48), highlighting Chinese citizens' consensus on the need to expand the Peoples' Liberation Army's global footprint, a trend it has so far resisted.<sup>10</sup>

The second most endorsed statement suggests a belief in China's capacity to exert influence on other nations' development through cooperation. A noteworthy 58 percent of respondents expressed agreement with this statement (aggregated score above 4), indicating the Chinese public perception of China's substantial influence on global dynamics and partnerships.

Consistent with the previous year, the possibility of China exporting its political and economic model abroad garnered the least support among respondents, with over one-third (36 percent; aggregated score below 4) expressing their disagreement. However, this statement appeared to be more popular amongst high income earners (mean of 3.89) and self-identified CPC members (mean of 3.94), suggesting a discrepancy between elite-level and public opinion.



PART III

# TOURISM, STUDY, WORK & EMIGRATION PREFERENCES

To better understand Chinese citizens' potential future global interactions, CCGPS 2024 analyzed the preferences of respondents to visit, study, work, or emigrate to various global jurisdictions.

## A. TOURISM

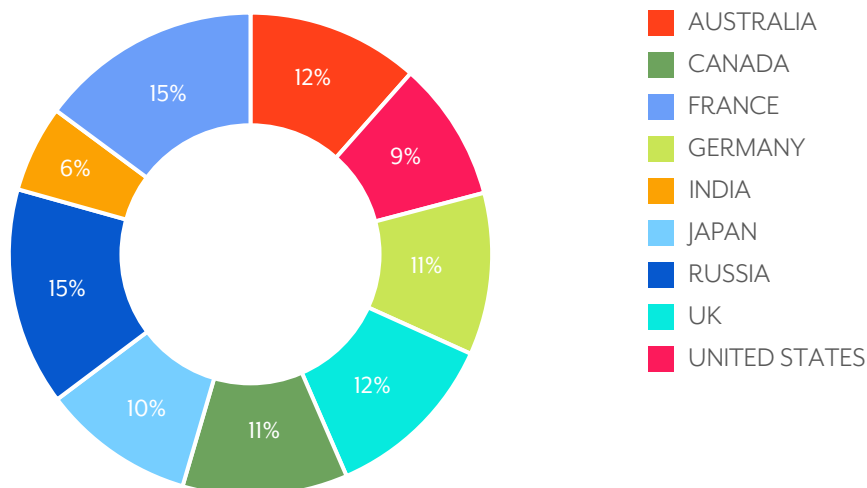
France, renowned as the world's most visited country, continued to attract significant interest in China, with 15 percent of respondents expressing a desire to visit as their top ranked locale. Russia followed closely behind, also commanding 15 percent of respondents' interest.

However, notable shifts in interest were observed in 2024 compared to 2023. Japan, which previously ranked third in terms of visitor interest (11 percent in 2023) declined to seventh place (10 percent in 2024). Since 2023, the release of treated wastewater from the damaged Fukushima nuclear plant in Japan has caused significant controversy in China, which may affect respondents' willingness to visit the country.<sup>11</sup>

Meanwhile, the United Kingdom emerged as the third most desired destination, having received 12 percent of total responses as a top ranked locale, signaling a notable rise in interest compared to previous years.

**FIGURE 3.A - CHINESE CITIZENS FIRST-CHOICE INTEREST IN TOURISM BY DESTINATION**

Interest in Visiting Select Countries



## B. STUDYING ABROAD

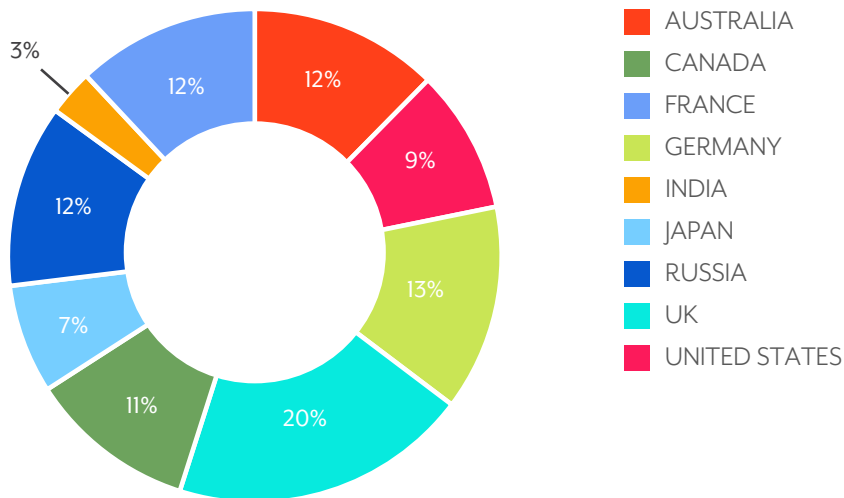
In terms of preferred academic destinations, the United Kingdom was the top choice for 20 percent of respondents. This marks a significant shift from the last iteration of the survey, in which the UK garnered interest from 16 percent of respondents, while the United States received interest from 20 percent of respondents. However, in 2024, the US slipped into sixth place, garnering support from only 9 percent of respondents. It trails behind India and Japan, which received 7 percent and 3 percent, respectively.

The decline in the US's position is unexpected, especially considering its renowned institutions and high numbers of Chinese students. However, this shift may have been prompted by stricter scrutiny of Chinese students at US ports of entry, inclusive of barring Chinese students with suspected ties to the People's Liberation Army.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, Russia and France maintained near parity in terms of academic appeal, continuing to attract almost equal scores. Canada, having garnered 11 percent of total responses, retained the same level of interest as in 2023.

**FIGURE 3.B - CHINESE CITIZENS FIRST-CHOICE INTEREST IN STUDYING ABROAD BY DESTINATION**

Interest in Studying in Select Countries

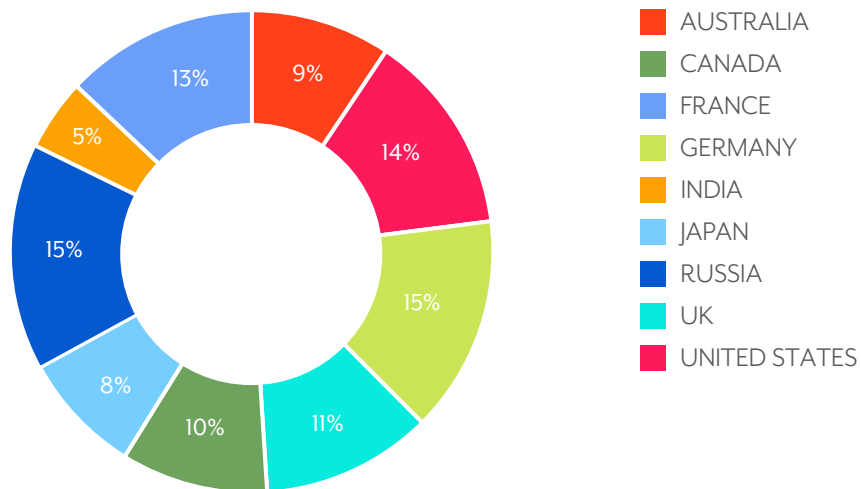


## C. WORKING ABROAD

Chinese respondents reiterated their preference for Russia as their preferred working destination. Russia maintained its position as the most attractive place to work for the second consecutive year, having received interest from 13 percent of respondents in 2023. Close behind is Germany, also commanding 15 percent of interest. However, India, Japan, and Australia continued to rank among the least attractive places to work for those considering employment abroad. This sentiment toward Australia is particularly unexpected given its reputation for high quality of life and robust economy.

**FIGURE 3.C - CHINESE CITIZENS FIRST-CHOICE INTEREST IN WORKING ABROAD BY DESTINATION**

Interest in Working in Select Countries





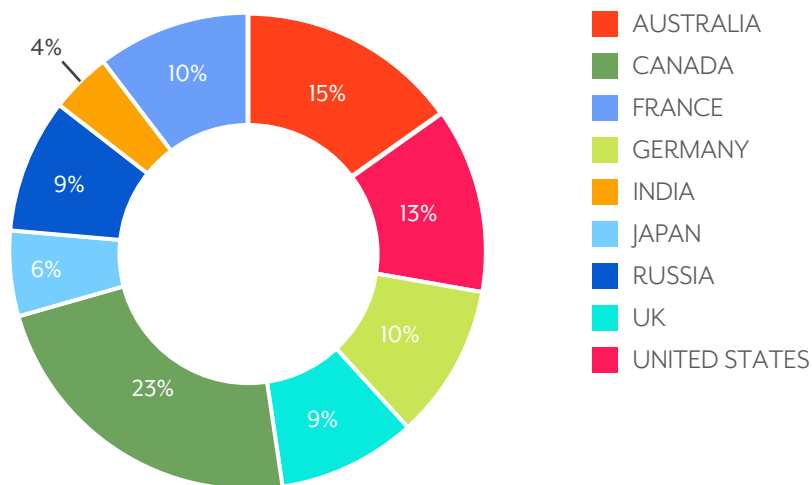
## D. EMIGRATION PREFERENCES

A considerable proportion of respondents expressed openness to emigration opportunities abroad, with Canada remaining a popular emigration destination with 23 percent of total responses, up from 12 percent last year. This suggests the strong appeal of Canada as a destination for potential immigrants among Chinese respondents, even amidst tense Canada-China diplomatic relations.

In contrast, Russia's popularity declined relative to the previous year, during which it garnered interest from 12.5 percent of respondents. It now ranks ahead of only India and Japan in terms of desirability as an immigration destination. This decline in popularity is notable, particularly considering the earlier observation that Russia is perceived as an attractive place to work.

**FIGURE 3.D - CHINESE CITIZENS FIRST-CHOICE INTEREST IN EMIGRATION BY DESTINATION**

Interest in Immigrating to Select Countries





PART IV

# CANADA & CHINA RELATIONS

The Canada and China bilateral relationship dates back to 1970, when Canada was one of the first Western nations to recognize the People’s Republic of China. With the exception of the post-Tiananmen period, Sino-Canadian relations generally remained positive in the four decades following normalization before entering a period of sharp deterioration kicked off by the Meng Wanzhou and Two Michaels saga in 2018.

Despite the prevailing tensions in the bilateral relationship, Canada-China trade has continued to grow in recent years, reaching historic levels in 2022. Nevertheless, in 2023, Canadian imports from China fell 11 percent year-on-year from their historic high of CAD 100.2 billion in 2022. Conversely, exports to China saw a small year on year growth of 6 percent from 28.7 billion in 2022 to CAD 30.5 billion in 2023, illustrating that China still has a strong appetite for Canadian exports.

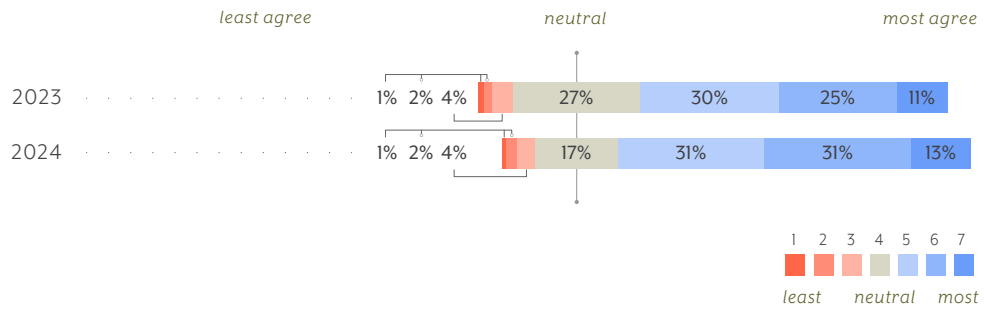
Canada-China diplomatic relations in 2023 were dominated by high-profile spats over a Chinese high-altitude balloon violating Canadian and US airspace, and allegations of election interference. These disputes led to reciprocal expulsions of diplomats and the launch of a public inquiry on election interference by foreign states, including China, which remains ongoing. However, while much of the Canadian media coverage of China has been overwhelmingly negative, it is unclear whether these politically sensitive topics have penetrated Chinese media.

The downturn in Chinese imports to Canada and strained diplomatic ties do not seem to be reflected in the CCGPS 2024 results. This indicates that bilateral relations and general Chinese sentiments toward Canada may not be as closely linked as commonly thought in every category measured. While current tensions have strained high-level diplomatic relations, general Chinese citizens’ views toward Canada remain rather positive.

## A. ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS

The number of respondents open to greater economic cooperation remained high in 2024, with nearly 75 percent indicating a general willingness (aggregated score above 4) to expand cooperation on economic ties. This trend is particularly apparent amongst higher-educated respondents (mean of 5.52), those residing in urban areas (mean of 5.36), and self-identified CPC members (mean of 5.30). These results also compare favourably to 2023, when 65 percent of respondents (aggregated score above 4) welcomed increased economic cooperation with Canada. These findings indicate that despite bilateral tensions and shrinking Chinese exports to Canada in 2023, the Chinese public remains open to increased economic ties going forward.

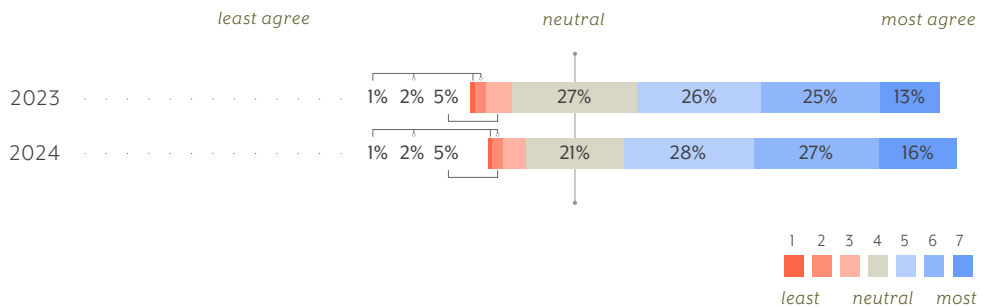
**FIGURE 4.A - SHOULD CANADA AND CHINA EXPAND ECONOMIC COOPERATION?**



## B. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE ACTIVITIES

When it comes to environmental cooperation with Canada, 71 percent of respondents gave an above-neutral score of 4, compared with 64 percent in 2023, an increase of 7 percent. However, it is notable that opinion on the question of strengthening environmental cooperation with Canada appears more splintered in 2024 than in 2023 (variance in means of 1.63 and 1.60, respectively), while support for such collaboration remains concentrated amongst higher-income and higher-educated respondents (means of 5.35 and 5.20, respectively).

**FIGURE 4.B - SHOULD CANADA AND CHINA EXPAND ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION?**

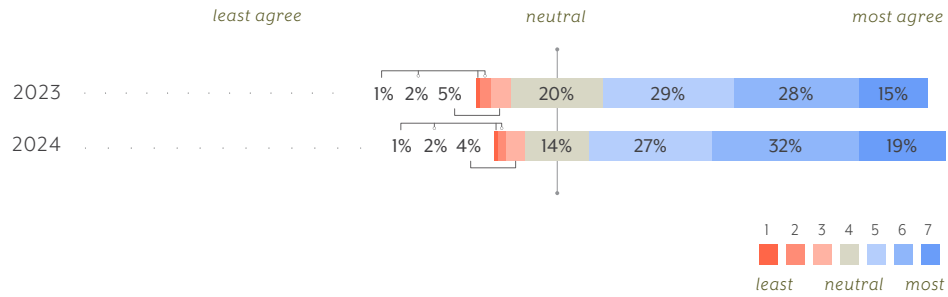


## C. CULTURAL EXCHANGES

The CCGPS 2024 data indicates that the Chinese public’s support for cultural exchanges with Canada remains strong. In 2024, 79 percent of respondents indicated support for cooperation on this front (aggregated score above 4), compared to 72 percent in 2023.

In contrast to environmental cooperation, public opinion appears more united on the topic of cultural outreach than in CCGPS 2023 (variances in means of 1.56 and 1.60, respectively). These findings reinforce and strengthen the notion that Chinese citizens are open to cultural exchange despite strained diplomatic relations.

**FIGURE 4.C - SHOULD CANADA AND CHINA EXPAND CULTURAL EXCHANGES?**



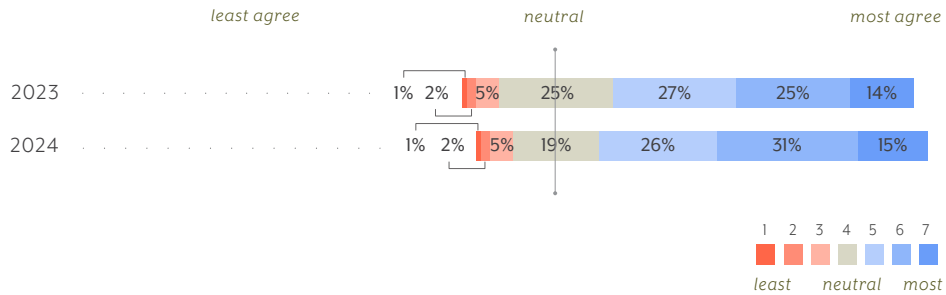
## D. GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Support for cooperation on global governance increased by 7 percent amongst respondents who were somewhat or strongly in favour of cooperation (measured by aggregated score of 4 or more), with 73 percent of respondents falling within this range in 2024 up from 67 percent in 2023.

Despite this uptick, opinions regarding global governance cooperation were more divided in 2024 compared to 2023. Namely, support for cooperation on global governance was primarily concentrated amongst those with higher levels of education (mean of 5.31), income (mean of 5.24), along with self-identified CPC members (mean of 5.34) and urban residents (mean of 5.29).

Overall, these trends suggest that there is a discernable inclination towards enhanced cooperation on matters of global governance with Canada, a notable development in the current international context.

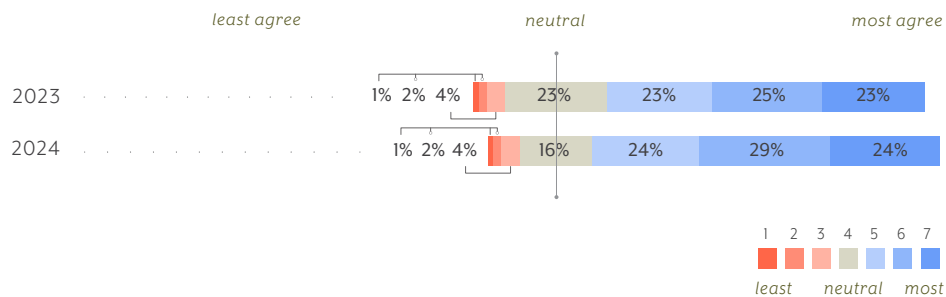
**FIGURE 4.D - SHOULD CANADA AND CHINA EXPAND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE COOPERATION?**



## E. GLOBAL SECURITY

Chinese citizens support for cooperation with Canada pertaining to issues on global security remains high, with nearly 80 percent of respondents (aggregated score of above 4) expressed some degree of support for greater collaboration between Canada and China. These findings align favourably with 2023 results, whereby 70 percent of respondents expressed their support for greater cooperation.

**FIGURE 4.E - SHOULD CANADA AND CHINA EXPAND GLOBAL SECURITY COOPERATION?**



## F. MAIN FACTORS INFLUENCING CANADA AND CHINA RELATIONS

A key finding from 2023 CCGPS was that Chinese citizens are not very knowledgeable about Canada. In light of this finding, the 2024 CCGPS asked participants whether they felt that the Canadian public was knowledgeable about China.

The findings show that nearly half of respondents (46 percent) somewhat or strongly disagree that the Canadian public has a strong understanding of China, while one-third of respondents expressed uncertainty on the subject. Moreover, only a minority of respondents (25 percent) perceive the Canadian public as having a comprehensive understanding of China. This is a view that appears mostly concentrated amongst highly educated (mean of 3.64), high-income (mean of 3.87), and urban (mean of 3.74) residents.

CCGPS 2024 also asked Chinese citizens about the factors they perceived as having the greatest impact on Canada-China relations. Four options were provided: (1) China’s growing international power; (2) Canada’s relationship with the US; (3) Differences in values between Canada and China; (4) Canada’s domestic politics and policy environment.

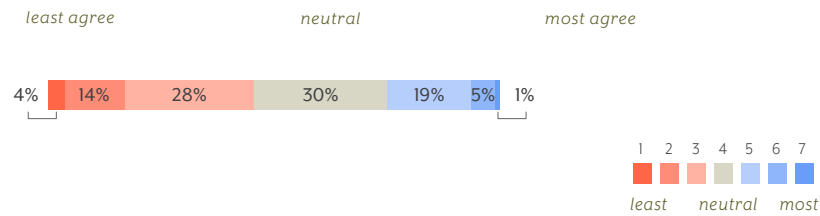
A large majority of respondents felt that the primary factor affecting the Canada-China relationship was “China’s growing international power”, with 82 percent somewhat or strongly agreeing (aggregate score above 4). This trend was particularly evident amongst self-identified CPC members (mean of 5.83), mid-tier professionals (mean of 6.01) and urban residents (mean of 5.84). These results mark an increase from 2023 when China’s growing power was the second highest-rated factor, with 72 percent of respondents somewhat or strongly agreeing (aggregate score above 4).

The second highest rated factor, and the highest one from CCGPS 2023, is “Canada’s relationship with the United States,” to which 80 percent of respondents somewhat or strongly agreed (aggregated score above 4). Canada’s close economic, military and cultural relationship with the United States is undoubtedly a major driving force in the direction of Canada-China relations, a connection most apparently recognized by non-CPC members (mean of 5.56), mid-tier professionals (mean of 5.83), and those with higher levels of education (mean of 5.7). Chinese citizens perception that the United States influences Canada-China relations may be influenced by the common depiction in Chinese state media of Canada as a U.S. proxy on the international stage.<sup>15</sup>

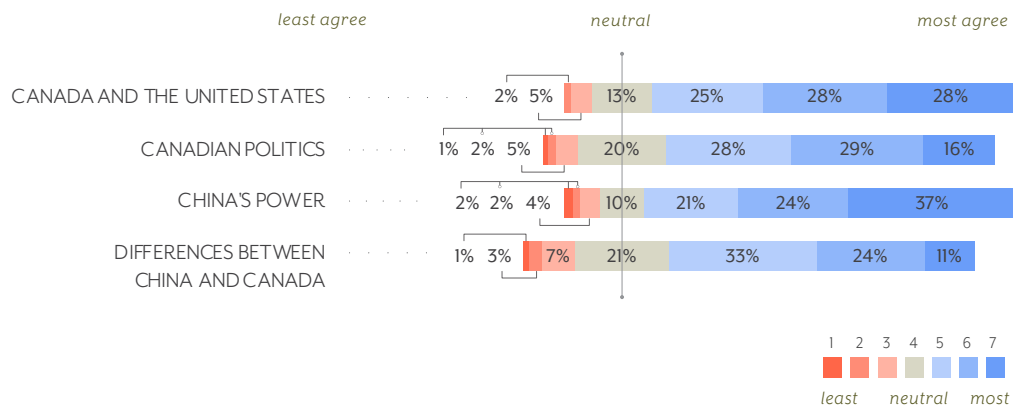
The third highest-rated factor was “Canada’s domestic politics and policy environment,” with 73 percent of respondents recording an answer above the neutral rating of 4. However, it is unclear what, if any, elements of Canada’s domestic politics and policies most Chinese citizens are acutely aware of.

Consistent with the 2023 findings, “differences in values between Canada and China remained the lowest-rated factor, with 68 percent of respondents giving it a score above 4, and only 11 percent of respondents strongly agreeing (score of 7). These findings generally align with the 2023 CCGPS, during which 58 percent of respondents gave it a score above 4, challenging the commonly held notion that inherent cultural differences are a primary barrier to Canada-China relations, as well as Chinese relations with the broader Western world.

**FIGURE 4.F - DOES THE CANADIAN PUBLIC HAVE A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF CHINA?**



**FIGURE 4.G - WHAT AFFECTS CANADA AND CHINA RELATIONS THE MOST?**



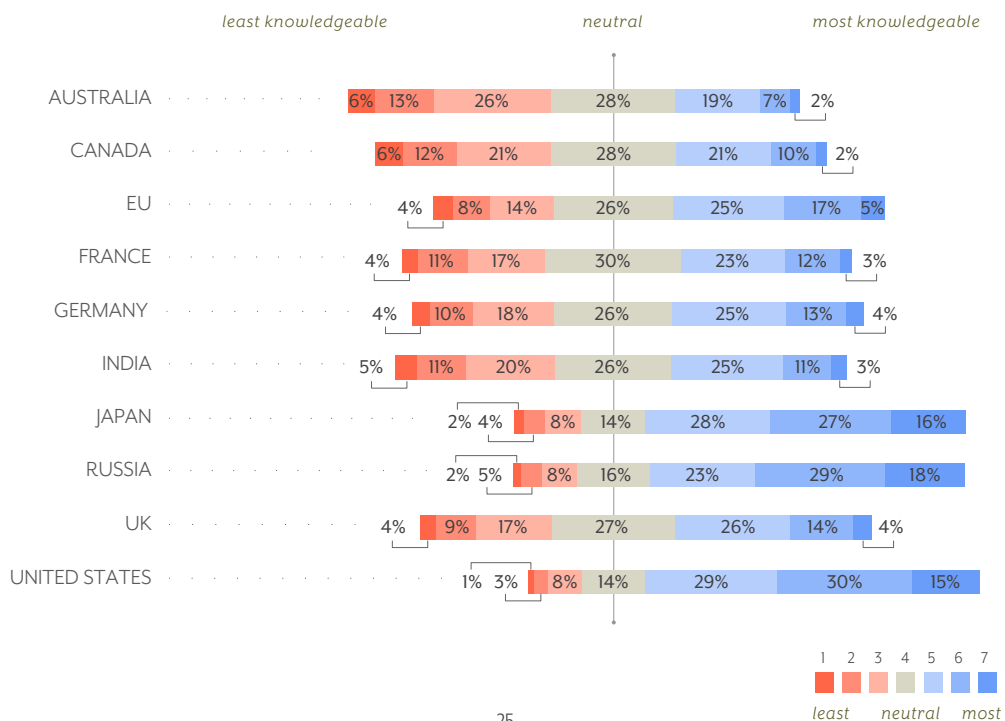
# SOURCES & KNOWLEDGE OF GLOBAL JURISDICTIONS

## A. KNOWLEDGE OF TRUST OF GLOBAL JURISDICTIONS

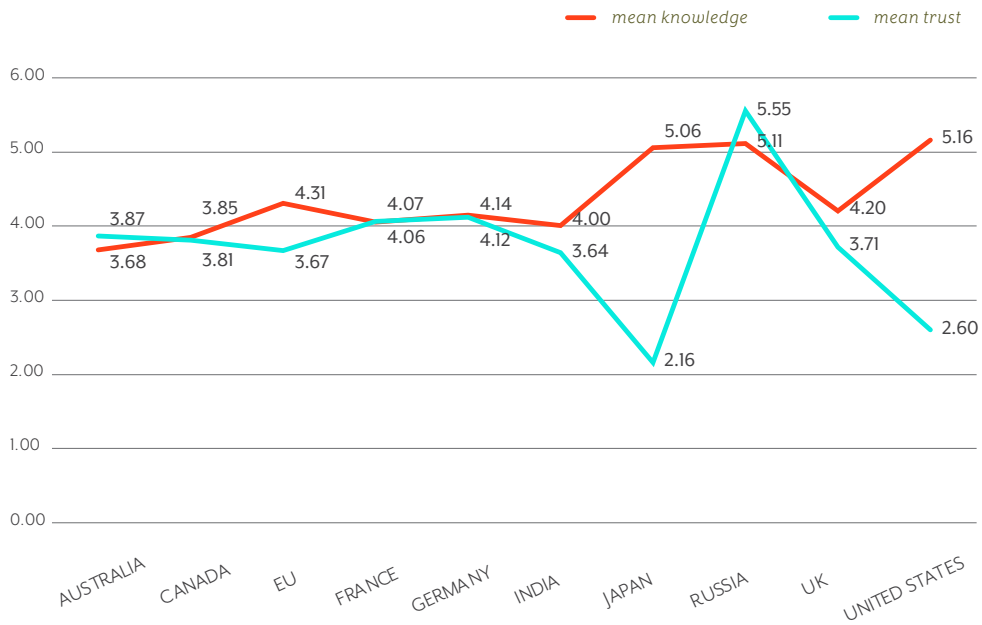
The jurisdictions most respondents felt they were somewhat or strongly knowledgeable were as follows (measured by above 4 aggregated ratings): the United States (74 percent), Japan (71 percent) and Russia (70 percent). In contrast, respondents were least likely to be knowledgeable of Australia (28 percent) and Canada (33 percent), a particularly interesting development given Australia’s geographic proximity to the mainland, and Canada’s long history of diplomatic contact with China.

CCGPS 2024 results further suggest that there is a significant relationship between a respondent’s knowledge and trust in a given jurisdiction (see Figure 5b). However, the effect size of this relationship differs by jurisdiction, with the effect size being smaller for the United States and Japan than in relation to Germany, the EU and Russia. This pattern suggests that respondents’ knowledge may play a larger role in determining their opinion of nations with less contentious relationships with China while having less of an effect in shaping their opinion towards less popular jurisdictions.

**FIGURE 5.A - KNOWLEDGE OF FOREIGN JURISDICTIONS**



**FIGURE 5.B - KNOWLEDGE AND TRUST OF FOREIGN JURISDICTIONS**



	Jurisdictional Familiarity	Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>
Trust Australia OLogit	.513*** (.042)	0.065
Trust USA OLogit	.199*** (.040)	0.040
Trust Germany OLogit	.402*** (.40)	0.057
Trust UK OLogit	.366*** (.039)	0.049
Trust Canada OLogit	.370*** (.039)	0.051
Trust Japan OLogit	.131*** (.037)	0.053
Trust EU OLogit	.410*** (.038)	0.051
Trust Russia OLogit	.618*** (.040)	0.092
Trust India OLogit	.276*** (.038)	0.044
Trust France OLogit	.535*** (.041)	0.074

Standard errors are in parentheses. \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$



## B. SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Social media platforms were Chinese citizens' most common method of obtaining information about the world, with 93 percent of respondents indicating that they use it somewhat to very frequently, and 53 percent of respondents stating they use it quite frequently. TV and personal discussions were ranked as the second (66 percent) and third (65 percent) most common sources of information on global affairs. Fourth and fifth place were taken by newspapers

**TABLE 5.A - SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT GLOBAL AFFAIRS**

	Television	Radio	Newspaper	Social Media	Personal Discussion
<b>Age</b>					
18-22	4.67	2.06	2.49	6.15	4.86
23-29	4.66	2.13	2.56	6.32	5.04
30-39	4.90	2.49	2.86	6.38	4.84
40-49	5.04	2.39	3.03	6.25	4.79
50-59	5.24	2.49	3.19	6.14	5.02
60+	5.32	3.00	3.40	5.84	5.09
<b>Education Level</b>					
Junior High and Under	5.2	2.5	2.9	5.8	4.8
High School Diploma	4.8	2.3	2.8	6.2	4.8
Associate's Degree	5.1	2.4	3.0	6.2	5.0
Bachelor's Degree	4.9	2.3	2.8	6.5	5.1
Master's and Doctoral Degrees	4.9	2.3	2.8	6.5	5.1
<b>Residential Location</b>					
Rural	5.04	2.44	2.87	5.91	4.89
Town	4.97	2.50	2.98	5.94	4.71
County	4.89	2.26	2.91	6.22	4.80
Medium-Sized City	5.03	2.48	2.96	6.27	5.02
Large City	4.92	2.41	2.85	6.35	5.00
<b>Employment Status</b>					
Full-Time	4.96	2.44	2.94	6.32	4.92
Part-Time	4.49	2.18	2.76	6.13	4.84
Unemployed	5.05	2.20	2.74	6.00	4.85
Student	4.86	1.90	2.44	6.31	4.91
Retired	5.30	2.95	3.34	5.71	4.97

(19 paper) and radio (12 percent), respectively. The decline of traditional mediums is in line with the trends seen in other jurisdictions but raises interesting questions about Chinese media censorship: the less centralized nature of the most common news sources, indicates that Chinese access to information may not be as strictly controlled by the government as commonly believed.

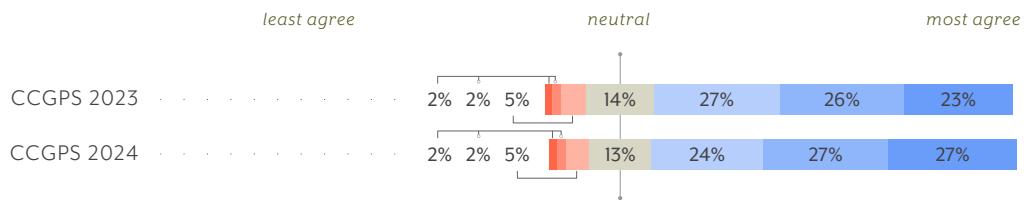
Overall, CCGPS 2024 suggests common trends within the global media environment. The importance of newspapers as a source of information is highest amongst elderly citizens (mean of 3.40) and lowest amongst younger cohorts (mean of 2.48). Furthermore, consumption of social media as a source of information differs amongst respondents across age cohort, educational background, localities, and employment status.

### C. ATTITUDE TOWARDS GOVERNMENT ACTION AND THE POPULAR WILL

CCGPS 2024 included a query designed to gauge Chinese citizens' views on whether there is a relationship between a government's policy and behaviour, and its own citizenry's viewpoints on the matter. Compared to CCGPS 2023, support for this statement was nearly identical, with only a 1 percent increase from 77 percent to 78 percent.

A deeper analysis of respondents' demographic backgrounds suggests a division in responses amongst those aged 40-49 (variance of 2.30), and least divided amongst those 50-59 (variance of 1.43). Opinions were divided among those who reside in mid-sized cities (variance of 1.47), the unemployed (variance of 1.48), and university students (variance of 1.43); perhaps not coincidentally, as these latter categories have suffered disproportionately during China's recent economic downturn.

**FIGURE 5.C - DOES A GOVERNMENT'S ACTION REPRESENT THE POPULAR WILL?**



# FINAL WORDS

The 2024 Chinese Citizens' Global Perception Survey highlights respondents' hopes and ambitions for China to play a leading and active role in international affairs. This is tempered by the fact that such aspirations are in a context of widening schisms between China and Western jurisdictions that is taking on a greater securitization dimension.

To wit, the Chinese public's desire for China to be an active global leader is influenced by the nation's increasing military strength. As the CPC continues to invest significant resources into modernizing and strengthening the People's Liberation Army, Chinese citizens have demonstrated a strong desire for China to expand its global military footprint in order to bolster its national security.<sup>16</sup> While this trend follows the path taken by other rising great powers, most notably the United States, it is likely that the expansion of the People's Liberation Army's operational capabilities will further increase tensions between China and Western jurisdictions in the second half of the 2020s.

Despite the ongoing tensions between China and many Western nations, the Chinese public did not express interest in pursuing comprehensive economic and technological decoupling from Western jurisdictions. This highlights how China sees the West as pivotal to its continued economic development, and how it intends to further consolidate its presence in the global economy.

At the same time, respondents remained steadfast in their belief in the need to deepen economic and technological ties with Russia, suggesting a high level of resilience in the Sino-Russian bilateral relationship driven by shared strategic interests. As Russia continues to antagonize Western jurisdictions, cementing its status as a 'pariah state', this relationship can lead to China being at odds with many of the desires expressed by the CCGPS 2024 respondents.

It is notable that Chinese citizens does not perceive cultural variances as a significant source of tension between China and Western jurisdictions. In fact, if cultivated well, cultural connections and people-to-people ties can serve as the conduit through which enlightened engagement can be achieved. As jurisdictions continue to face economic headwinds in the aftermath of COVID-19, the Chinese public's hope for more active global cooperation may bring attention to shared values and objectives that can cement heightened understanding.

# APPENDIX: EXPLAINING THE ‘RUSSIA EFFECT’

The positive responses pertaining to Russia may appear noteworthy to some readers, all the more since they echo similar results from last year’s CCGPS, suggesting a consistent pattern of analytical interest. There is a significant caveat to consider for interpreting these results. It is plausible that Chinese citizens’ perceptions of Russia are potentially influenced by a preference orientation that is elastic and malleable.<sup>17</sup> One that can be disaggregated further by respondents’ demographic profile, and their pre-existing knowledge and primary sources of information about global affairs. This potential was tested using a series of ordered logistic regressions.

Appendix Table 1 suggests that Chinese citizens’ self-reported knowledge of Russia has a significant impact on their trust in Russia (effect size of 0.56). In addition, those that receive more of their information on global events from television (effect size of 0.08) and social media (effect size of 0.13) are more likely to trust Russia, while those that primarily rely on radio (effect size of -0.99) are less likely to trust Russia.

Gender seemingly plays a significant role in determining respondents’ trust of Russia, with females displaying less trust than males (effect size of -0.24). Interestingly, however, other factors such as location (urban vs rural setting), CPC membership or education, does not appear to have a statistically significant impact on respondents’ propensity to trust Russia.

Chinese citizens’ interest to travel to Russia is influenced by their trust of the jurisdiction (effect size of 0.26) rather than other factors such as age and CPC membership. Moreover, urbanites (effect sizes of 0.51, 0.73, and 0.76, respectively) and those with household incomes above 20,000 RMB (effect size of 0.47) are more likely to indicate a desire to travel to Russia. Albeit, this trend does not hold across all income levels.

Chinese citizens that express higher levels of trust in Russia are more likely to be open view the nation as a study destination (effect size of 0.10), along with those that receive much of their information on global affairs from newspapers (effect size of 0.12). However, respondents’ willingness to study in Russia was not dependent upon their age (average effect size of -0.09), level of education (average effect size of 0.16), household income (average effect size of 0.15) or CPC membership (effect size of -0.29).

Respondents that indicated higher levels of trust in Russia (effect size of 0.17) and received information from traditional media sources such as radio and newspapers (effect sizes of 0.17 and 0.11, respectively) were more likely to express an interest in Russia as a potential employment destination. In contrast, those residing in urban settings were less likely to

express an interest in working in Russia, though effect sizes were more pronounced amongst those living in small and medium-sized cities (-0.69 and -0.66, respectively). Notably, respondents' family income did not appear to have a statistically significant effect on their propensity to consider Russia as an employment destination (average effect size of -0.37).

Finally, respondents that rely primarily on newspapers to receive information on global events (effect size of .27) and younger Chinese citizens (effect size of 1.15) were more likely to express an interest in emigrating to Russia. While younger respondents were significantly more likely to express an interest in residing in Russia, those that primarily rely on social media were less likely to select Russia as an emigration destination (effect size of -0.34). Respondents' household salary, location, and gender did not influence their likelihood of emigrating to Russia over the coming decade.

APPENDIX TABLE 1: KNOWLEDGE OF RUSSIA

	Coefficient	Standard Error	Z-score	P-value
<b>Knowledge of Russia</b>	.559	.0328	17.06	0.000
<b>Age</b>				
23-29	.125	.156	0.80	0.423
30-39	.072	.152	0.48	0.635
40-49	-.001	.151	-0.01	0.993
50-59	.078	.169	0.46	0.645
60+	-.061	.180	-0.34	0.731
<b>Female</b>	-.235	.083	-2.65	0.008
<b>Media Usage</b>				
Traditional Media (TV, Radio, Newspaper)	0.64	0.36	1.80	0.72
TV	.080	.028	2.89	0.004
Radio	-.099	.033	-3.01	0.003
Newspaper	.082	.032	2.58	0.010
Social media	.129	.042	3.04	0.002
Personal Discussion	-.005	.0324	-0.15	0.879
<b>Residential Location</b>				
Town (Population: 80,001 to 200,000)	-.080	.197	-0.41	0.684
Small City (Population: 200,001 to 3 million)	-.197	.188	-1.04	0.297
Medium-Sized City (Population: 3 to 5 million)	.0840	.193	0.43	0.664
Large City (Population greater than 5 million)	.348	.189	1.84	0.066
<b>Education Level</b>				
High School Diploma	.286	.160	1.79	0.074
Associate's Degree	.289	.166	1.74	0.083
Bachelor's Degree	.285	.169	1.69	0.091
Master's and Doctoral Degrees	.292	.238	1.23	0.219
<b>Communist Party Membership</b>	.104	.111	0.94	0.345
<b>Monthly Household Salary (RMB)</b>				
5,000-9,999	-.091	.195	-0.47	0.641
10,000-14,999	-.403	.194	-2.08	0.037
15,000-19,999	-.256	.204	-1.25	0.210
20,000+	-.323	.204	-1.58	0.114

Note: The base effect of each categorical variable was dropped from the regression to avoid complete multicollinearity.

# METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This report is based on the 2024 Chinese Citizens' Global Perception Survey (CCGPS). CCGPS is a national online and telephone survey that examined citizens' perspectives on China's current relations with global actors, including Australia, Canada, the EU, France, Germany, India, Japan, Russia, the UK, and the US.

The survey poses questions geared towards mainland Chinese citizens' attitudes on (1) foreign relations, (2) global peace and security leadership, (3) international trade and investments, (4) preferences on education, emigration, and tourism, (5) global social and economic governance, and (6) research and technological collaboration.

The survey included 33 questions and involved 7-point Likert scale questions. Individual demographic information gathered by the study included: age, gender, urban/rural status, marital status, and Communist Party membership. The socio-economic information collected included education level, functional language abilities, occupation, and individual/household income.

In partnership with the lead author and a survey firm in mainland China, the CCGPS collected responses across urban and rural mainland China in the first quarter of 2024. It utilized a stratified, random sampling approach. It elicited 2,007 valid responses and achieved a distribution of responses that generally mirrors China's 2020 national census demographics regarding gender, age, education, income, and residential location type (see Table MC1 and Figure MC1).

Response validity was determined based on completeness, meaning invalid surveys left one or more required questions incomplete, and were thus excluded. This standard survey administration practice has the small potential to add bias to the results.

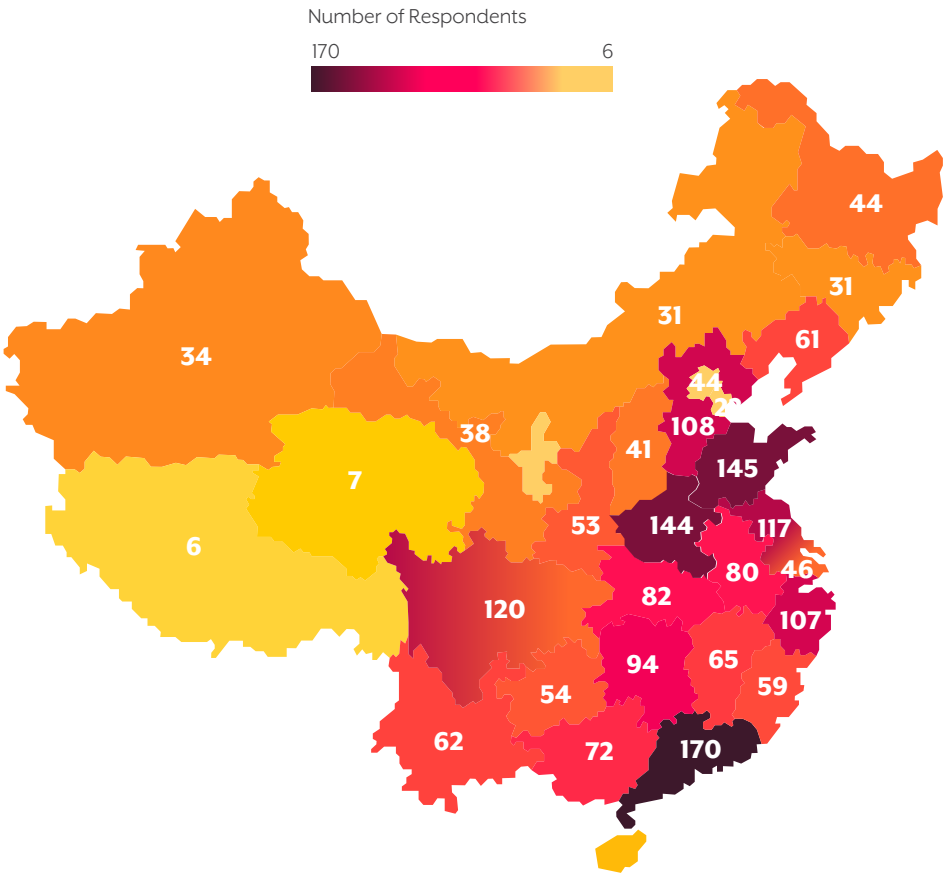
TABLE MCI

## Demographic Variables

	Freq.	Percent		Freq.	Percent
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Education Level</b>		
Male	1031	51	Junior High or below	205	10
Female	978	49	Senior High	506	25
<b>Age</b>			College 3-year	533	27
18-22	245	12	Bachelor	654	33
23-29	346	17	Postgraduate or above	108	5
30-39	473	24	<b>Marital Status</b>		
40-49	451	23	Single	390	20
50-59	284	14	Married	1392	69
>=60	204	10	In Relationship	158	8
<b>Residential Location</b>			Divorced	67	3
Rural Level	141	7	<b>Number of Children</b>		
Town Level	262	13	0	620	31
County Level	442	22	1	844	42
Medium-Sized City	414	21	2	497	25
Large-Sized City	748	37	3 or more	46	2
<b>Communist Party of China Member</b>			<b>Studied in Foreign Nation</b>		
Yes	395	20	Yes	94	5
No	1612	80	No	1913	95
<b>Employment Status</b>			<b>Employment Type</b>		
Full-Time	1332	66	State-Owned Company	301	15
Part-Time	157	8	Government	113	6
Unemployed	148	7	Private Company	654	33
Student	181	9	Foreign Company	81	4
Retired	189	10	Social Organization	69	3
<b>Monthly Personal Income (in RMB)</b>			Self-Employed	242	16.5
0-4999	994	50	<b>Monthly Family Income (in RMB)</b>		
5000-9999	485	24	0-4999	126	6
10000-14999	312	16	5000-9999	417	21
15000-19999	113	5	10000-14999	546	27
Above 20000	103	5	15000-19999	388	20
			Above 20000	530	26



**FIGURE MC1 GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION**



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