Online Supplementary Materials

Why Economic Inequality Undermines Political Trust: An Analysis of Mechanisms

- Shuai Jin, University of Massachusetts-Boston.
- Yue Hu, the **correspondign author**, Tsinghua University, email: yuehu@tsinghua.edu.cn.
- Tianguang Meng, Tsinghua University.

List of Sections

1. Technical Notes for the Measurements
2. Methodological Notes of the Mediation Analysis
3. Robustness Test
4. Results Visualization

1. Technical Notes for the Measurements

In this study, we utilized data from the 2013 Chinese Household Finance Survey (CHFS) and the 2015 wave of the Chinese Urban Governance Survey (CUGS). Both collected respondents through face-to-face interviews. The CHFS was conducted from June to August 2013, achieving a response rate of 89.1%. The CUGS took place between June 19 and August 28, 2015, with a response rate of 63.6%.

We derived Gini coefficients for provincial income inequality from the CHFS data, employing the formula:

$$G = 1 - \sum(q_i + q_{i-1})(p_i - p_{i-1})$$

where (q_i) is the cumulative proportion of income, and (p_i) is the cumulative proportion of the population within province (i). This calculation yielded coefficients ranging from 0.491 to 0.656.

To assess perceptions of *impartial governance*, we measured respondents' views on the government's equitable treatment of all citizens. *Government responsiveness* was evaluated through perceptions of external political efficacy, specifically examining the belief in the government's attentiveness to public demands. For *judicial justice*, we inquired into the extent to which individuals believed that courts and procuratorates upheld judicial fairness. Lastly, *anti-corruption performance* was gauged through respondents' satisfaction with government efforts to combat corruption, providing a comprehensive overview of government performance from the perspective of the governed.

For the first three variables, we used the responses in CUGS to the battery of questions "to what extent, do you agree with the following statements":

1. In our country [China], everyone is treated equally by the government;
2. The government in our country sufficiently responds to the public's demands;
3. The courts and procuratorates of over country preserved judicial justice.

Responses were recorded on a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 denotes "totally disagree," 2 signifies "disagree," 3 indicates "agree," and 4 represents "definitely agree." It is important to note that a "don't know" option was available for these and subsequent questionss.

Perceptions of anti-corruption efforts were evaluated by querying participants about their satisfaction with the municipal government's anti-corruption performance: "How satisfied are you with the following aspects of the municipal government's work[Anti-

Corruption]? Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied, or not satisfied at all?" Again, responses were recorded on a scale from 1 to 4 and with a "don't know" option, where 1 denotes "totally disagree," 2 signifies "disagree," 3 indicates "agree," and 4 represents "definitely agree."

Political trust was gauged through individuals' expressed levels of trust in both central and local governments. The CUGS inquired:

> People trust central and local governments differently. Do you definitely trust, somewhat trust, not quite trust, or not trust the [central/local] governments at all?

Trust was measured on a 1 to 4 scale, with 1 indicating the lowest level of trust and 4 the highest. An "don't know" option was also included.

It is pertinent for readers to recognize that political trust, particularly towards the central government, may have been elevated in 2015, influenced by the ongoing anti-corruption campaign led by Xi. This condition could potentially compress the variance in political trust measurements, complicating the identification of the explanatory variable's impact or leading to its underestimation. We encourage replication studies with datasets from different time periods.

Regarding external political efficacy, CUGS inquired "to what extent you agree with the statement that the government sufficiently responds to the public's demand." The responses were recorded in exactly the same format as political trust.

Nationalism was measured through responses to four distinct probes. CUGS asked "to what extend you would agree the following statements":

1. I would rather be a citizen of China even if there is a possibility to be citizen of other countries.
2. In general, China is better than other countries.
3. When someone criticizes Chinese citizens, I feel it pointing at me.
4. Our culture is superior to others.
5. The established political regime fits the status of current China.
6. I would migrate to the US if given a chance.

Responses were recorded on a scale from 1 to 4 and with a "don't know" option, where 1 denotes "totally disagree," 2 signifies "disagree," 3 indicates "agree," and 4 represents "definitely agree." We combined the above indicators into an index of nationalism through exploratory factor analysis. The Cronbach's alpha of the indicators is 0.79, indicating a high internal consistency of the indicators for the latent variable.

We gauged public political knowledge through a quiz on political general knowledge, encompassing questions:

- According to our country's law, which political institution elects the President of the state? _____ (Fill 88 for "Don't know")
- What is the full term of a deputy of our country's Provincial People's Congress? _____ years (Fill 88 for "Don't know")
- Can you tell me who currently holds the following political positions? (Ask for each position individually, and record if the respondents' answer is "correct," "incorrect," or "don't know")
  - General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party
  - Prime Minister of China
  - President of the U.S.
  - Prime Minister of Japan

The scores from this quiz provided a quantitative measure of respondents' political knowledge.

To evaluate exposure to corruption, we developed an additive scale based on respondents' self-reported perceptions of corruption prevalence among officials in various sectors:[1]

> How widespread do you think corruption issues are among officials at all levels of our government? Is it almost non-existent, not very common, relatively common, or very common? (Ask for each item individually)

The items are:

- Local government officials
- Central government officials
- State-owned enterprise leaders
- Deputies of the People's Congress/NPC delegates and CPPCC members
- Police/Tax and other law enforcement personnel
- Judges/Prosecutors

The responses were recorded on a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 represents "Almost non-existent," 2 for "Not very common," 3 for "Relatively common," and 4 for "Very common." There are also "Don't know" and "Refuse to answer" options for the respondents.

The descriptive statistics for the above variables are detailed in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 4: Statistics of the Numeric Variables (N = 3513)

[1] Additionally, we explored an alternative measure by averaging these prevalence reports.

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Missing (%)
Political Trust (Central)	3.27	0.64	1.00	4.00	4
Political Trust (Local)	2.98	0.75	1.00	4.00	4
Corruption Prevalence (Mean)	2.80	0.65	1.00	4.00	14
Corruption Prevalence (Sum)	13.17	7.05	0.00	24.00	0
Government Responsiveness	2.49	0.77	1.00	4.00	11
Nationalism	-0.00	0.93	-3.67	1.60	0
Political Knowledge	3.80	1.72	0.00	6.00	0
Impartial Governance	2.42	0.82	1.00	4.00	9
Judicial Equality	2.85	0.73	1.00	4.00	10
Anti-Corruption	2.68	0.83	1.00	4.00	11
Inequality	0.56	0.05	0.49	0.66	0
Age	43.20	15.04	18.00	70.00	0
Urbanization	1.95	0.91	1.00	3.00	2
Education	4.10	1.88	1.00	9.00	1
Family Income	2.37	2.35	1.00	10.00	0
Local GDP	6914.56	7238.32	447.70	25123.45	0
Local Population	665.50	544.46	97.36	3371.84	0
Local Average Wage	64306.21	17479.42	35229.00	113073.00	0
Local Revenue	9558984.29	13952489.49	317900.00	55194964.00	0

Source: China Urban Governance Survey 2015.

Table 5: Statistics of the Categorical Variables (N = 3513)

		N	%
Female	FALSE	1746	49.70
	TRUE	1767	50.30
Migrant	FALSE	1620	46.11
	TRUE	1893	53.89
Party Member	FALSE	3104	88.36
	TRUE	409	11.64
Occupation	Agriculture	172	4.90
	Institution Employee	1980	56.36

nonlabor	298	8.48
others	33	0.94
POE	632	17.99
Public Service	93	2.65

Source: China Urban Governance Survey 2015.

2. Methodological Notes of the Mediation Analysis

In this study, we employed the causal mediation analysis as our primary method for examining mechanisms (Imai, Keele, and Tingley 2010; Imai et al. 2011). Despite our efforts, we have not found a proper way in incorporating post-stratification weights within the current methodological framework. Preliminary analyses of those documented in Table 1 were conducted with post-stratification weights and revealed no substantial alterations in outcomes. However, for the sake of consistency and because our research objective focuses on mechanism exploration rather than descriptive analysis, we opted to proceed without weighting in both the main text and supplementary materials. In addition, we do not simply use clustered standard errors or similar methods for potential heteroskedasticity, rather exploring them more systematically as elaborated in Supplementary Material 3.2.

Figure 2 presents the mediation analysis results graphically. It depicts the explanatory, mediating, and outcome variables within boxes. Below each variable label, we present the estimates of the mediation ("indirect") effects along with their 95% bias-corrected and accelerated confidence intervals (Hall 1988). The diagram uses arrows to illustrate the influence pathways and directions, with solid arrows denoting statistically significant paths at the 0.05 level and dashed arrows indicating non-significant relationships. The arrow linking inequality directly to political trust denotes the direct effect of inequality on trust, with the arrow labels indicating specific estimates.

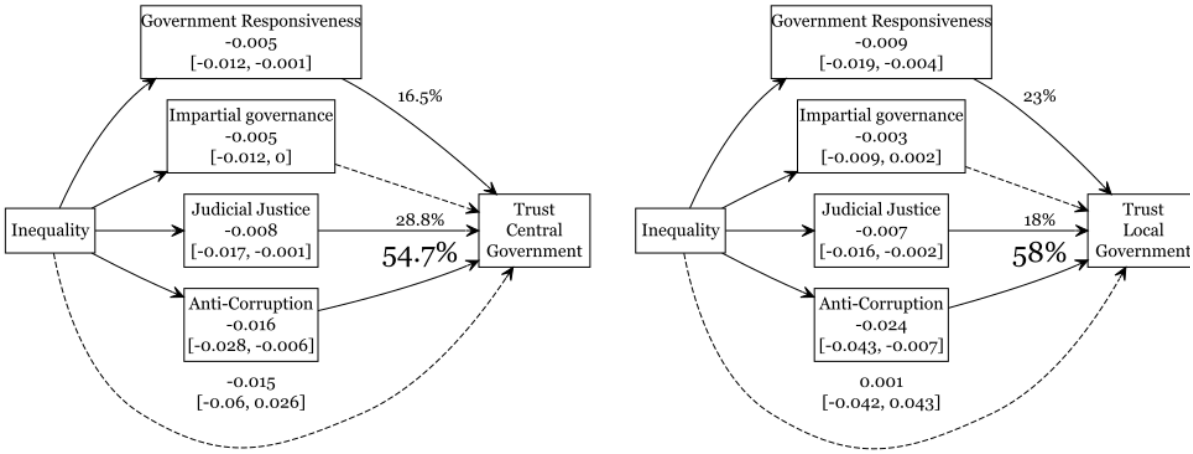

Figure 2: Mediative Effect of Inequality on Government Trust. This figure delineates the mediation effects, factoring in the presence of other mediators. The analysis incorporates a comprehensive control of gender, age, education level, family income, party membership status, occupation type, migration status, urbanization, as well as provincial economic indicators including GDP, population size, average wage, and governmental revenue. Source: China Urban Governance Survey, 2015.

We would like to highlight several aspects of these findings:

2.1 Total Effect

First, we draw the readers' attention to the consistently negative total effects of inequality on government trust, aligning with theoretical expectations, yet not reaching significance at the 0.05 level. This occurrence is common in mediation analysis, especially for nuanced mechanisms (Agler and De Boeck 2017). The total effect's standard error, derived from both direct and indirect effects, may not show statistical significance if either effect does not significantly vary the outcome variable. This explains why tests of indirect effects can sometimes offer more insight than those of total effects (Kenny and Judd 2014). Mediation analysis metaphorically compares to a two-throw process in achieving a distance, with the indirect effect involving an intermediate step, making it conceptually easier to cover ground in two stages than in a single effort.

Empirically, we acknowledge the limitation imposed by our sample size, which restricts a clearer insight. However, a study with a larger sample size data (N = 8563) by Zhou and Jin (2018) confirms the total effect's presence, supporting the MEM's proposition that inequality does not have to perform a salient, immediate effect to influence public political cognition.

2.2 Sensitivity

Another critical aspect is the sensitivity of our mediation analysis. Our aim is to reveal the causal effect of inequality, mindful of the non-random assignment of the mediation effect. This necessitates adherence to the "sequential ignorability" assumption, which posits the treatment's ignorability given pre-treatment covariates, followed by the mediator's ignorability considering both treatment and pre-treatment covariates (Imai, Keele, and Tingley 2010).

To assess potential violations of this assumption, we employed a parametric sensitivity test, focusing on residual correlation across all meditative paths (Imai, Keele, and Yamamoto 2010; Imai, Keele, and Tingley 2010; Imai et al. 2011). This test calculates a correlation coefficient () within the range of [-1, 1], where a non-zero () suggests omitted variables that could undermine the assumption. The sensitivity analysis gauges the () magnitude necessary to nullify the observed effect.

Table 6: Sensitivity Test

Mediator	Central	Local
Government Responsiveness	0.10	0.15
Impartial governance	0.10	0.05
Judicial Justice	0.20	0.20
Anti-Corruption	0.25	0.40

Table 6 outlines the critical () values for each path, suggesting that the initial effect direction remains valid unless () exceeds these thresholds. These tests indicate the analysis's robustness to some deviations from mediator ignorability, without a definitive benchmark for () significance. Comparatively, our () values align with those from other significant studies, implying a reasonable sensitivity to potential confounders. Although the value was not as high as in the methodological paper where the sensitivity test was constructed (0.68, Imai, Keele, and Tingley 2010, 64), we see a similarity to some other cases. For instance, in replications published in a top journal paper, the reported ρs were 0.2 and 0.39 (Imai et al. 2011). In another top journal publication, the reported ρ was between 0.09 to 0.22 (Wolak 2020, n. 12). It is noteworthy that, in *none* of the above papers, the researchers claimed that the reported ρs were big enough (actually, the latter

paper's author contained that the value was small). Therefore, we present the original ρ values here for readers' own judgements.

As argued in Wolak (2020), caution is warranted in interpreting these results as strictly causal. Despite efforts to control for mediating effects through pre-test covariates, complete adjustment is challenging due to the myriad of influencing sociopolitical and socioeconomic factors. We encourage future research with more comprehensive data to replicate and expand upon our findings. The exception of impartial governance at the local level, which shows excessive sensitivity, does not undermine our main findings due to the absence of strong claims about this pathway.

2.3 Substantive Significance of the Findings

In the last note, we wish to direct our readers' focus towards the substantive magnitudes of the mediation mechanisms identified in our study. It becomes evident from Table 2 that the effect sizes, although statistically significant, are modest in magnitude. Considering the range of the outcome variables from 1 (indicating the least trust) to 4 (denoting the most trust), and similarly for the mediators, the coefficients of the mediation effects appear relatively minor. This suggests that the impact of income inequality in 2015, while statistically detectable, was not substantially potent enough to significantly alter one of the world's highest levels of political trust (Tang 2016).

Methodologically, these small estimates is largely attributed to the limited variance in both the inequality and political trust measures, as well as the possibility that each mediator is influenced by numerous other significant variables. Hence, a replication of this study with a broader and more diverse dataset, or potentially a cross-national analysis, would be valuable.

Substantively, it raises the question whether any factor could dramatically shift political trust within China's unique sociopolitical context. Nonetheless, these nuanced effects merit scholarly attention for several reasons. First, many macro-level influences, such as language (Pérez and Tavits 2017) and culture (Inglehart and Welzel 2005; Pye 1992), exert a subtle yet profound impact on societies over time. These forces may not manifest prominently in the short term but can lead to significant divergences in political cognition and societal development over extended periods. If income inequality acts as such a structural factor, its influence should not be assessed solely based on its immediate impact. Moreover, the robustness of the identified mechanisms across various measures,

methods, and model specifications underscores their significance, despite their quantitative modesty (refer to Supplementary Material 3 for detailed analysis).

Second, the contextual backdrop of our study positions it within the "least-likely-case" research paradigm. The prevailing high-trust political culture in China, documented through extensive quantitative and qualitative research, underscores the stability of this trust, especially towards the central government (L. Li 2021, 2022). In such a context, any variable impacting political trust warrants closer examination. From a "least-likely case" perspective, if income inequality can influence citizens' trust in such a high-trust environment, its impact is likely more pronounced in less trust-endowed societies (Gerring and Cojocaru 2016).

The economic conditions in China further contextualize our findings. Despite growing economic disparities, the societal impact of inequality was initially gradual, with the issue only prioritized by authorities around 2017 (Xi 2017). The fact that inequality has already begun to subtly yet consistently influence political trust through the mechanisms we have identified is noteworthy. This influence is poised to be even more significant in contexts where inequality has been a longstanding societal concern.

These observations suggest that the modest effect sizes observed may indeed reflect the nuanced reality of inequality's impact on politics and society. Future research is encouraged to further investigate and validate the mechanisms uncovered in this study, as well as to explore additional connections between macro-level inequality and micro-level political cognition.

3. Robustness Test

3.1 Endogeneity

Within the main body of this paper, we explored four mechanisms through which macroeconomic inequality influences individual political perceptions, employing mediation analysis. Nonetheless, the specter of endogeneity looms large. Simplified, the concern is whether the results might reflect the influence of the outcome variable on the explanatory variables, rather than the intended direction. This is particularly problematic when dealing with time-invariant variables.

To mitigate this issue, our research design strategically utilizes data: inequality measurements from 2013 and public political opinions from 2015. This chronological

sequencing aims to ensure the causal direction from inequality to political perceptions. However, the potential for endogeneity persists in the transition from mediators to political trust, given their simultaneous assessment within the same survey. This is especially pertinent regarding trust in government, which may be influenced by perceptions of governmental concern for the populace and the perceived success of anti-corruption efforts, potentially reflecting high trust in leadership and the government's role in national advancement (Zhu 2018).

To address these concerns, we draw on both theoretical and empirical grounds. Theoretically, extensive literature underscores external efficacy as a foundational element of political trust (Craig, Niemi, and Silver 1990; Hutchison and Johnson 2011; Tang 2016) and documents the impact of anti-corruption perceptions on governmental support and decision-making (Claypool et al. 2018; Catterberg and Moreno 2006; Pharr and Putnam 2018). While these references do not entirely dispel endogeneity concerns, they provide a solid basis for understanding the pathways from political efficacy and anti-corruption sentiment to political trust, acknowledging the potential for reciprocal causation.

Empirically, we employ simultaneous models to quantify the possible reverse effects on our findings. Separate models are crafted for political efficacy and anti-corruption satisfaction, with each mediator modeled to have an endogenous relationship with political trust and exogenous links to control variables, such as demographic and socioeconomic factors. For the equation system to be identifiable, we add new variables: nationalism for political trust, political knowledge for political efficacy, and the perception of corruption prevalence in the governmental system for anti-corruption satisfaction. These additional variables maintain clear associations with the potentially endogenous constructs.[2] The estimation employs two-stage least squares (2SLS) methodology.[3]

[2] For measurement details of these variables, refer to Supplementary Material 1.
[3] Performed using the `systemfit` package, version 1.1-24, in R version 1.4.904.

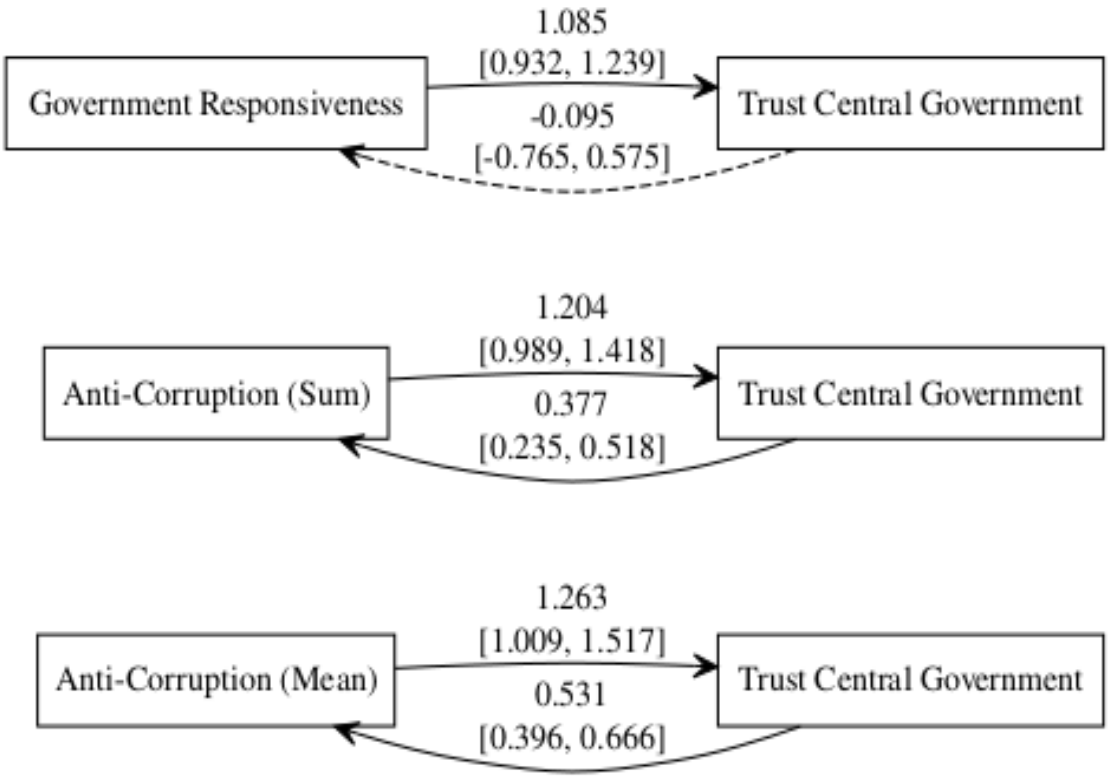

Figure 3: Influence Mechanisms Between Government Responsiveness/Anti-Corruption Satisfaction and Political Trust. This plot captures the estimated relationships within the outcome model of the mediation analysis. Beyond the variables presented in the diagram, the model comprehensively adjusts for inequality, gender, age, education level, family income, party membership status, occupation type, migration status, urbanization, and provincial economic metrics such as GDP, population size, average wage, and governmental revenue. Source: China Urban Governance Survey, 2015.

Figure 3 displays the findings, adopting the same visual representation as the mediation analysis. Variables of interest are depicted within boxes, while arrows denote the directionality of influence, with solid arrows indicating statistically significant estimates at the 0.05 level. The coefficients and 95% confidence intervals are annotated alongside the arrows. Exogenous variables have been excluded for simplicity, though comprehensive numerical results can be found in Supplementary Material 4.

The analysis reveals a significant influence of political efficacy on public trust in the central government, without a reciprocal effect of similar magnitude. Notably, there exists a bidirectional relationship between anti-corruption satisfaction and trust in the central government. However, the influence exerted by anti-corruption satisfaction on trust is substantially greater—nearly triple—than that of the reverse direction (across both measures of corruption prevalence). Thus, even if the impact of anti-corruption satisfaction were to decrease by 25%, it would remain the most pivotal mediator through

which inequality affects public trust in the central government, leaving our core conclusions unchanged.

While our dataset limits a comprehensive assessment of endogeneity at the local government level, the theoretical rationale and empirical findings presented suggest that endogeneity should not significantly compromise the integrity of our conclusions. Particularly in the Chinese context, where there exists a pronounced disparity in trust levels favoring the central over local governments, the absence of a marked reverse effect at the central level implies a reduced likelihood of significant endogeneity concerns at the local level. Nonetheless, this assertion awaits further validation through detailed investigations with expanded datasets in future studies.

3.2 Spatial Dependency and Multicollinearity

In addressing robustness, we confront potential concerns of spatial dependency and multicollinearity within our analysis. To manage spatial dependency, we incorporated provincial-level covariates such as GDP, population, local average wage, and revenue in the main analysis. Acknowledging the existence of other regional variances, we enhanced our model with province-level fixed effects to comprehensively account for their potential impact on our findings.

Table 7: Mediative Effect of Inequality on Trust of the Central Government

Mediator	ADE	AME	TOTAL
Anti-corruption Satisfaction	0.048 (0.902)	-0.021 (0.000)	0.027 (0.948)
Government Responsiveness	0.048 (0.894)	-0.006 (0.010)	0.042 (0.904)
Impartial Governance	0.048 (0.936)	-0.006 (0.032)	0.042 (0.942)
Judicial Justice	0.048 (0.830)	-0.011 (0.000)	0.037 (0.850)

Standard errors and two tailed P-values in the parentheses.ADE: Average Direct Effect. AME: Average Mediation Effect.

Table 8: Mediative Effect of Inequality on Trust of the Local Government

Mediator	ADE	AME	TOTAL
Anti-corruption Satisfaction	0.349 (0.450)	-0.034 (0.000)	0.316 (0.496)
Government Responsiveness	0.349 (0.474)	-0.011 (0.000)	0.338 (0.484)
Impartial Governance	0.349 (0.468)	-0.003 (0.358)	0.347 (0.472)

Judicial Justice	0.349 (0.460)	-0.009 (0.000)	0.340 (0.482)

Standard errors and two tailed P-values in the parentheses.ADE: Average Direct Effect. AME: Average Mediation Effect.

The outcomes, as detailed in Table 7 and Table 8, align closely with those presented in the main text, with a notable exception. The inclusion of provincial fixed effects rendered the influence of impartial governance on central government trust identifiable, segueing into concerns over multicollinearity.

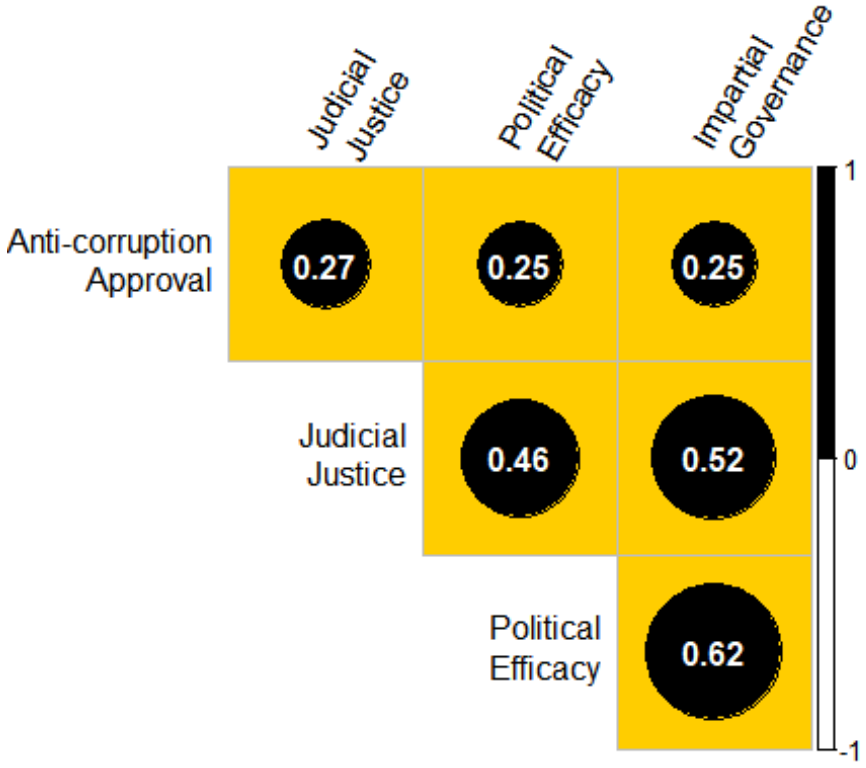

Figure 4: Correlation among Mediators

Figure 4 illustrates the correlations (Kendall's (_B)) among the mediators, highlighting strong associations between impartial governance, judicial justice, and political efficacy exceeding 0.5. These pronounced correlations suggest multicollinearity could potentially skew the mediation analysis. To gauge the extent of this impact, we evaluated the mediation mechanisms in separate models, diverging from the combined mediator approach.

Table 9: Mediative Effect of Inequality on Trust of the Central Government

Mediator	**ADE**	**AME**	**TOTAL**
Anti-corruption Satisfaction	-0.043 (0.050)	-0.018 (0.010)	-0.061 (0.004)
Government Responsiveness	-0.039 (0.080)	-0.019 (0.000)	-0.059 (0.002)

Impartial Governance	-0.042 (0.056)	-0.021 (0.000)	-0.063 (0.000)
Judicial Justice	-0.047 (0.028)	-0.015 (0.016)	-0.062 (0.000)

Standard errors and two tailed P-values in the parentheses.ADE: Average Direct Effect. AME: Average Mediation Effect.

Table 10: Mediative Effect of Inequality on Trust of the Local Government

Mediator	**ADE**	**AME**	**TOTAL**
Anti-corruption Satisfaction	-0.025 (0.232)	-0.025 (0.008)	-0.051 (0.022)
Government Responsiveness	-0.019 (0.312)	-0.024 (0.000)	-0.043 (0.042)
Impartial Governance	-0.025 (0.230)	-0.023 (0.000)	-0.048 (0.022)
Judicial Justice	-0.029 (0.142)	-0.016 (0.006)	-0.045 (0.028)

Standard errors and two tailed P-values in the parentheses.ADE: Average Direct Effect. AME: Average Mediation Effect.

The separated models presented in Table 9 and Table 10 reveal that isolating the mediators results in the total effects and the direct influence of governmental equality attaining statistical significance at the 0.05 level, mirroring the main text's findings (Table 2) without substantial deviation.

Our discussion in the main text offers a speculative rationale for the ambiguous role of impartial governance. These additional analyses suggest that beyond theoretical interpretations, the non-significant estimates might also stem from data limitations. Given that multicollinearity primarily affects statistical efficiency, the enduring significance of the other three mechanisms under a potential multicollinearity scenario underscores their statistical resilience. However, the search for suitable instruments that could circumvent multicollinearity while adequately adjusting for confounders proved unfruitful with the current dataset.

Consequently, we present both sets of results to our readers: the main text maintains the findings from a conservative approach, incorporating detailed regional controls and analyzing all mediators collectively, while this section explores alternative specifications. We invite future studies to further explore and validate these findings with a more extensive dataset.

3.3 Socioeconomic Variance

The level of political trust varies among different economic groups. To explore whether the impact of inequality differs across income levels, we assessed the average mediation effects identified in the main analysis across the income spectrum: comparing the lowest and median income groups, as well as between the median and highest income groups.

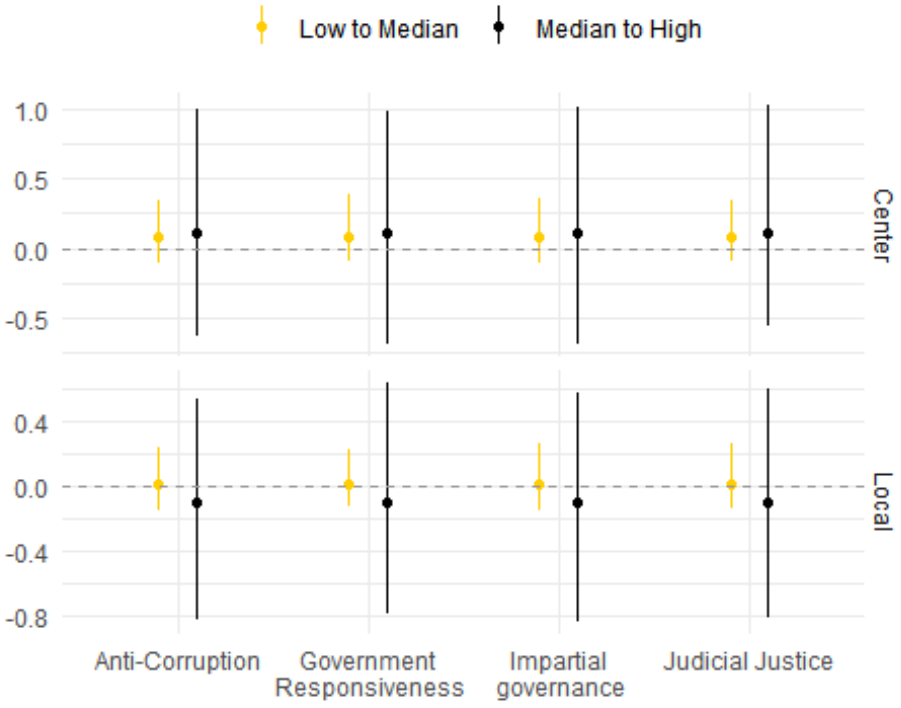

Figure 5: Variance of Inequality Influence Across Different Income Groups. This plot delineates the disparities in impact between low and median income groups, as well as between median and high-income groups. Dots represent the point estimates, and whiskers extend to illustrate the 95% confidence intervals. For clarity, the effects on central and local political trust are distinctly displayed in two separate panels. Source: China Urban Governance Survey, 2015.

The findings, depicted in Figure 5, reveal that the shift in effect size from median to high-income groups is marginally more pronounced than the shift from low to median-income groups. However, none of the observed changes across any mechanism or government level reach a conclusive threshold. This pattern may be attributed to data limitations, particularly concerning the representation of higher income groups, as under-sampling of these segments is a common challenge in population surveys. Future research with more detailed data covering these income stages is encouraged to delve deeper into this aspect.

4. Results Visualization

The first phase of our analysis is visually summarized in Figure 6. This graphic representation, generated using the `dotwhisker` package in R (Solt and Hu 2015), features dots representing point estimates of the inequality coefficients, with whiskers extending to delineate the 95% confidence intervals. This visual approach facilitates a clear and immediate understanding of the relationship between inequality and political efficacy, highlighting the precision of our estimates within the defined confidence bounds.

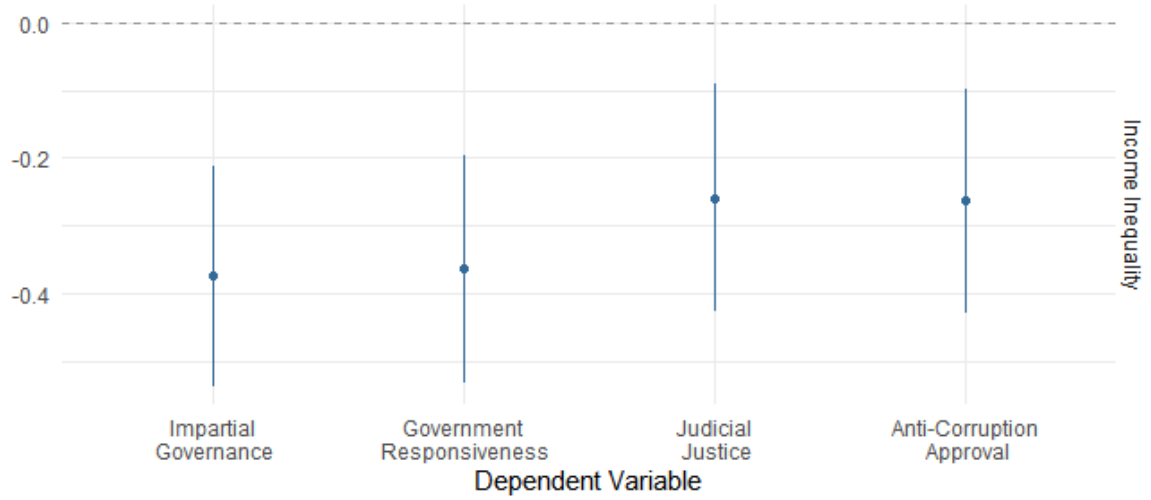

Figure 6: Effects of Inequality on Political Perceptions. This plot showcases the impact of income inequality on political attitudes as analyzed through the Mediator Evaluation Model. Dots indicate point estimates, with whiskers marking the 95% confidence intervals, derived from cumulative link regression analyses. For clarity, control variables have been excluded from this visual representation. Source: China Urban Governance Survey, 2015.