

## What Makes You Approach Strangers ?

### The Role of Relational Mobility, General Trust and Self-Esteem

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Recent evidence has suggested that compared with the East, people from the West are more willing to talk and approach strangers. While individualism-collectivism is often argued as traditional explanation for this cultural difference, the factors driving people from the West to approach strangers remain uncovered. To address this question, we adopt a perspective of socio-ecology, focusing on the role of relational mobility and two potential psychological factors: general trust and self-esteem. General trust and self-esteem are argued as adaptive beliefs fostering people to engage in social relationship expansion behavior, such as approaching stranger, in a society with high relational mobility. However, it remains unclear whether cultural differences in general trust and self-esteem are responsible for the differences in approach towards strangers between the West and the East. We conducted two studies between Japan and the U.S. and found that, first, relational mobility had positive effect on approaching towards strangers. Second, general trust and self-esteem mediated the effect of relational mobility on approaching towards strangers. Specifically, higher relational mobility in societies was associated with higher general trust and higher self-esteem, which were further linked to a stronger tendency to approach strangers compared to societies with low relational mobility.