



Spring 2023

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# The Global North and Global South in Political Dilemma: Postmaterialist Effects of Age on Government Trust

## Abstract

The ever-changing nature of the population in different age cohorts creates a variance in issue priorities between and among younger and older generations. This relationship can be explained by the theory of postmaterialism, which insists that there is a rising attachment among young people to postmaterialist values and goals, such as self-expression, especially within the society of younger age cohorts. As younger generations have become more prevalent in demanding the United States government and other nations in the Global North to engage in lawmaking that nourishes their postmaterialist values and needs, I attempt to examine the relationship between one's age and their degree of trust towards the government. This paper finds that an individual's degree of trust in the U.S. government is likely to decrease inversely with their age, which is supported by regression tests. However, when examining the Global North and the Global South at a macroscopic level, the confidence in government increased when there was an increase in age, and the Global North had a higher degree of government confidence than the Global South counterpart.

## Keywords

government trust, government confidence, postmaterialism

## Disciplines

Political Science | Political Theory

## Comments

Written for Jacober Scholars Program.



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# THE GLOBAL NORTH AND SOUTH IN POLITICAL DILEMMA

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Postmaterialist Effects of Age on Government Trust

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ACADEMIC YEAR 2022-2023

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**Abstract**

*The ever-changing nature of the population in different age cohorts creates a variance in issue priorities between and among younger and older generations. This relationship can be explained by the theory of postmaterialism, which insists that there is a rising attachment among young people to postmaterialist values and goals, such as self-expression, especially within the society of younger age cohorts. As younger generations have become more prevalent in demanding the United States government and other nations in the Global North to engage in lawmaking that nourishes their postmaterialist values and needs, I attempt to examine the relationship between one's age and their degree of trust towards the government. This paper finds that an individual's degree of trust in the U.S. government is likely to decrease inversely with their age, which is supported by regression tests. However, when examining the Global North and the Global South at a macroscopic level, the confidence in government increased when there was an increase in age, and the Global North had a higher degree of government confidence than the Global South counterpart.*

**Introduction**

People of younger generations have different perceptions of and priorities for a wide range of policy issues in comparison to their older generation counterparts. The way in which members of the American public vote for and elect candidates during Congressional elections that appeal to their interests has pushed forth a nature of United States politics that are partly influenced by one's age. Thus, younger generations are deemed to experience "clear gaps between its economic interests and politics and those of the whiter, older generations," and such discord can become more robust and noticeable as the population cohort from younger generations transitions into adulthood (Frey 2018). Discussions pertaining to the extent of which the government should be primarily responsible for legislating and developing public policy responses to such economic issues that are inherently fixated upon the political and cultural differences between younger and older generations are still up for debate. Molyneux and Teixeira (2010) finds that Millennials who are in the ages of 18 to 32 have more confidence in government and view its performance more favorably than do older generation counterparts (Molyneux and Teixeira 2010).

In this paper, I examine the relationship between one's age and their degree of trust towards their government to explore any influence that generational gaps may have towards general trust towards the government within the realm of global public opinion and potential implications of age on national public policy debates and processes. Thus, this paper attempts to investigate the following research question: *What is the relationship between one's age and their degree of trust towards the government to do what is right?* From an overarching standpoint, older and younger people have varying levels of priorities toward different public policy issues; for example, older generations may prioritize policy discussions surrounding the Social Security program more than younger generation counterparts. As policymakers and elected officials engage in lawmaking to address the needs of the population from both older and younger generations, I attempt to provide insight into the public's perception of their government's performance in accordance with their age. While age may not be the only variable that helps to determine one's trust towards the government, I hypothesize that in comparing individuals, the older an individual is, the lower their degree of trust will be in their government to do what is right. I specifically test this hypothesis through the use of 2012, 2016, and 2020 datasets from the American National Election Studies (ANES) for the United States counterpart, since those years provide more recent data on the public opinion among the general public in the U.S. and years 2012, 2016, and 2020 illustrate noticeable partisan shifts as President Barack Obama (D) was incumbent in the office in 2012 and 2016 and President Donald Trump (R) held his presidency during the year 2020.

This paper finds that, in general, one's degree of trust towards the U.S. government decreases as their age increases, and these two variables are found to hold a statistically significant relationship with one another. Thus, there is an inverse relationship between these two variables. The multivariate regression test conducted in this paper includes control variables that

conceptualize the postmaterialist values that younger generations tend to have, such as openness to foreigners and LGBTQ communities, and finds that they are also statistically significant to the relationship between one's age and their degree of trust towards the government.

In this paper, I conduct an analysis of the relationship between age and government trust in the Global North and the Global South, to assess whether the trend that was found in the U.S. counterpart is consistent in the rest of the countries in the Global North and its differences from the Global South. This analysis will encompass the same research question that I previously proposed to test my hypothesis with the data on the U.S. I use the data from the World Values Survey that spans from 2017 to 2020 to conduct the regression tests, as these years illustrate the contemporary political environment where postmaterialist values are present. The regression analyses find that while government confidence among public increased in the Global South and the Global North as a whole, countries in the Global North sustained a greater degree of government confidence than the Global South counterparts.

### **History and Importance of Public's Trust Towards the U.S. Government**

The degree of trust towards the U.S. government among the general public in the United States has been and remains low. The data put forth by Pew Research Center found that “[o]nly two-in-ten Americans say they trust the government in Washington to do what is right ‘just about always’ (2%) or ‘most of the time’ (19%)” (Pew Research Center 2022). About 73 percent of Americans in 1958 indicated that they trust the government to do what is right always or most of the time, but that percentage has declined to 20 percent in 2022 (Pew Research Center 2022). However, there had been fluctuations in the degree of government trust among Americans, with the 1960s being marked by the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War and the 1970s being marked

by the Watergate scandal and worsening economic struggles in the nation that contributed to declining trust towards the government within the public's sphere, while the trust in government was on an increasing trajectory with the growth of the U.S. economy in 1990s (Pew Research Center 2022). The trust in government among the public increased following the 9/11 terrorist attacks as well, although "the shares saying they can trust the government always or most of the time has not surpassed 30%" since 2007 (Pew Research Center 2022). Thus, Hardin (2013) insists that "if government handles crises and disasters well, it can be given credit for its seeming competence even while it is held accountable for failing to prevent the crisis or disaster," which can be illustrated and exemplified by the U.S. government's response to 9/11 terrorist attacks and the public's perception of such governmental actions (Hardin 2013, 48). Trust in government could vary depending on how well the government performs on specific policy or issue areas, as Chanley (2002) found that increased public attentions to issues pertaining to international affairs, as well as more positive assessments of the economy and the president's job performance are factors that had been found to lessen public cynicism about government, while greater concern among the public on crime was found to increase public cynicism about government (Chanley 2002).

However, there are varying definitions of trust in government that complicate the process of examining trust in government at the individual level that is complicated than rather straightforward. From a large spectrum, trust in government can be defined as "the public's belief that the federal system and the politicians who lead or oversee it are 'responsive and will do what is right even in the absence of scrutiny'" and people who don't trust their government are more likely to not vote nor participate in other types of civic participation and less likely to follow public health guidelines (Hitlin and Shutava 2022). Moreover, the outcomes of Congressional and presidential elections can generate partisan shifts that could influence the public's perception of

the government. For example, Brooks and Cheng (2001) found that “shifts in party control contribute to changes in the impact of presidential and congressional confidence,” although they recognize that such changes could still take place even if changes in the party control were not to take place (Brooks and Cheng 2001, 1363). A study by Morgeson III et al. (2022) supported such a relationship between partisan shifts and the public’s perceptions of the U.S. government because their study found that partisanship possesses a significant effect on citizen satisfaction, confidence, and trust in the U.S. federal government, while they also note that such indicators that illustrate public’s perception towards the U.S. government can be affected by variances in partisan bias that could change over time (Morgeson III et al. 2022).

The 21<sup>st</sup> century United States marks historical changes in national politics and policies. In 2009, then-Senator Barack Obama (D-IL) was inaugurated as the first African American president of the United States following his victory in 2008 Presidential election, in which he garnered 365 electoral votes and 66,862,039 popular votes against Senator John McCain (R-AZ), who garnered 173 electoral votes and 58,319,442 popular votes (New York Times 2008). In December 2022, President Joe Biden (D) signed the bipartisan Respect for Marriage Act (H.R.8404) into law that mandated federal recognition for same-sex and interracial marriages, which exemplifies social progress toward fostering LGBTQ+ communities and other historically marginalized social groups (Shear 2022). In the U.S., these historical events mark a shift towards more socially and culturally liberal values that resemble postmaterialist values.

### **The Relevance of Public’s Trust Towards Governments in the Global North vs. South**

The Global North and the Global South are isolated from one another in their ability to keep and sustain stable government regimes. The operation of governments in the Global South is



“often hampered by ‘weak institutions’” as formal institutions are unable to “influence a specific distribution of power, authority, or expectations” (Peeters and Dussauge Laguna 2021, 971). Moreover, the process in which the implementation of public policies and enforcement of laws take place in the Global South is characterized to be uneven and patchy, and people’s trust in their state institutions has remained low over the years (Peeters and Dussauge Laguna 2021). While the Global South have experienced an expansion in their political citizenship and abstract formal rights over the years, their economic exploitation and failure to provide basic services to the public continue to persist (Miraftab 2009). Thus, the struggle of state authorities in the Global South in serving the members of its public may present a case of low trust in governments among their citizens.

Similar to the United States, the degree of trust towards the government in other parts of the Global North has been low. For example, in November 2015, more than half of Swedes, Finns, and Dutch and less than 17 percent of Spaniards, Greeks, and Portuguese expressed that they trust their respective national governments (Foster and Frieden 2017). Foster and Frieden (2017) find that in the European Union, socioeconomic status is correlated to an individual’s confidence in their government, as people who are unemployed, less skilled, and less educated have been shown to hold strongly negative views about their governments and institutions of the EU (Foster and Frieden 2017). Thus, in the study by McLaren (2012) on European politics, the author argues that a higher level of social welfare protection could help to reduce political distrust (McLaren 2012). There are also other countries in the Global North that have exhibited changes in political trust among members of the public that were based on different variables. Wang (2016) examined the effects of government performance and corruption on political trust in three countries in East Asia, which included Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan (Wang 2016). The study found that corruption

can “exacerbate the positive effect of government performance on political trust,” although the government performance itself cannot remediate the negative correlation between corruption and political trust (Wang 2016, 228). Government performance and political trust maintains a symbiotic relationship that could affect how governments serve the public. Kim (2010) examines public trust in government in Japan and South Korea and suggests that “fundamental government competencies of meeting the expectations of emerging critical citizens with self-expression values and a desire for citizen participation, improving economic development and the quality of public services, and reducing corruption” are critical in enhancing public trust in both nations (Kim 2010, 808). The study by Kim (2010) may primarily be relevant to Japan and South Korea, but it contributes to potential policy recommendations that governments in the Global North can consider in improving public’s trust in their government/public institutions. On the other hand, the study by Jamil and Beniamin (2019), which examines institutional trust in Bangladesh and Nepal, focuses on the impacts of cultural values on government trust, in which they argue that cultures that value authority and power can lead to people trusting public institutions more (Jamil and Beniamin 2019). While these instances may not be the case across the nations in the Global North, these studies provide insights on variables that influence the public’s trust in government to do what is right.

### **The Intergenerational Shift Towards Postmaterialist Values**

Changes in both global and domestic economies around the world that occurred over the years through series of armed conflicts and diplomatic tensions provided opportunities for people to explore different values and beliefs without any significant constraints and challenges that would have been imposed during the times of global and interstate conflicts. Inglehart and Norris

(2017) insist that “unprecedentedly high levels of existential security” that emerged in developed democracies following the World War II contributed to an onset of “intergenerational shift toward Postmaterialist values,” which emphasizes “freedom of expression, environmental protection, gender equality, and tolerance of gays, handicapped people, and foreigners.” (Inglehart and Norris 2017, 443). These postmaterialist values are more prevalent among people from younger generations than older generation counterpart, as economic conditions that younger cohorts experience are different than the ones that had been encountered during wartimes by older cohorts. Inglehart and Flanagan (1987) argue that postmaterialism is “linked with one’s having spent one’s formative years in conditions of economic and physical security,” which is more salient among postwar generations when comparing them to older generations (Inglehart and Flanagan 1987, 1296).

The younger generations generally do not perceive economic security as their primary issue area in comparison to older generations or materialists, allowing them to take a stauncher priority towards nonmaterial topics, such as social and environmental issues. These older cohorts, or materialists, emphasize resolving their immediate physiological needs, while postmaterialists express to feel secure about such needs and have higher levels of political skills that enables them to better participate in politics and engage in political mobilization and actions (Inglehart and Catterberg 2002). For example, materialists evolve their concern around economic issues and issues related to national security, while postmaterialists are more likely to prioritize issues that are non-material, such as environmental issues, and join environmental groups (Tranter and Booth 2015). Also, younger generations have shown to be less concerned about their material security and more interested “in pursuing intrinsic values such as equality and personal fulfillment” as the prevalence of postmaterial values has risen (Dassonneville and McAllister 2021, 285). Henn et al.

(2022) exemplify an emphasis on nonmaterial issues among young generations in their study, in which they provided that young environmentalists and cosmopolitans, who tend to be subscribed to postmaterialist outlooks, are “socially and culturally liberal and approving of diversity in all its forms” and characterized as “internationalist and inclusive” as they tend to express solidarity with and trust of foreigners from different cultures and nationalities (Henn et al. 2022, 724). Environmentalism is one of the prominent issues that postmaterialists tend to be vocal about and it also helps to portray the extent to which younger generations are more likely to engage in political activism than older generation counterparts. According to Booth (2017), younger respondents, who typically affiliate themselves with postmaterialist values, have been shown to “directly express greater environmental concern and attend more environmental protests” and be more likely to be associated with postmaterialism than older generation counterparts (Booth 2017, 1414).

### **Implications of Postmaterialist Values on Government Trust**

As younger generations are generally deemed to be more associated with postmaterialist values and more politically engaged than older generation counterparts, their degree of trust towards the U.S. government remains low, although the argument for such an analogy is somewhat varied within the scholarly literature. Lee and Norris (2000) insist that postmaterialist values, which are normally affiliated with younger generations and postwar birth cohorts, “promote protest activity and also directly increase psychological involvement in politics,” which leads to greater concern for issues like environmentalism and may lower one’s support for political authorities and institutions that “are on the defensive” and focused on maintaining their status quo (Lee and Norris 2000, 389-390). Also, as people experience improvement in their economic conditions and access

to education, postmaterialism and emphasis on self-expression arise through the process of “socioeconomic modernization and post-modernization” that generate greater degree of activism among citizens and “widen the gap between public expectation for government performance,” which are factors that erode institutional trust (You and Wang 2020, 69). A study by Röder and Mühlau (2012) also supports these preceding studies on how postmaterialism, which is generally associated with younger generations, influences one’s trust towards government institutions (Röder and Mühlau 2012). They posited that postmaterialism is linked with lower political trust (Röder and Mühlau 2012). This has been the case because postmaterialism “reflects elite-challenging views and behaviour, as well as increased dissatisfaction with the established authority in today’s democracies,” and it is characterized as a pro-democratic idea (Röder and Mühlau 2012, 782). While younger generations may express distrust towards their government, their shift towards living societies where postmaterialist values are present has offered a greater sense of mobility for them to advocate for their political and social objectives. Newer generations tend to “have less respect for authority,” which pushes them to be more likely to evaluate their leaders and institutions by having more demanding standards (Dassonneville and McAllister 2021, 285). Furthermore, in accordance with the postmaterial theory, growing affluence of and increased levels of education in western societies have inflicted value change has led postmaterialists, which are generally associated with younger age cohorts, to expect more from the government and be less deferential to elites (Martin 2013).

From a broader standpoint, value shift from materialist to postmaterialist in advanced democracies has been correlated to declining public support for government institutions, as pursuance of long-term economic development and affluence that occurred following 1950s have opened an avenue for the public to be “less deferential to authority” and better prepared to

challenge the government through protests (Wang 2005, 156). Thus, the series of generational shift and “cumulative forces of change” that are experienced by younger generations have produced lower levels of political trust and increased level of cynicism towards political institutions and figures, which has been the case in the United States between the mid-1960s and late 1970s when the nation experienced a sudden decline in political trust (Dalton 2005, 146). Therefore, levels of government trust among younger generations are generally low, because of their increased opportunities and willingness to mobilize for political activism that have become possible as they are normally surrounded by society and environment that is economically secure than the ones that were experienced by older generations.

The degree of trust towards the government among younger and older generations are typically low, but older generations can also be more susceptible to lower degree of trust towards government institutions than younger generation counterparts. The idea behind this analogy is that older generations are being replaced by younger generations, which erodes their traditional values and beliefs, as postmaterialist values of younger generations are actively attempting to reform the political and economic state of the nation. Specifically, as younger age cohorts replace older age cohorts, the issues of redistribution and inequality in regard to the discussion of welfare state that had been emphasized among older age cohorts “gradually lose their political significance.” (Edlund 1999, 356). If younger generations are actively mobilizing around postmaterialist values and issues and stray away from traditional values or beliefs that older age cohorts have held over the years while replacing those older age cohorts, there should be a declining level of government trust among older age cohorts at a higher level in comparison to younger age cohort counterparts.

Trust towards government among younger and older generations can also be examined from the perspective of how individuals trust one another as people. Robinson and Jackson (2001)

argue that if adolescents and young adults become less trusting of others over time, “then U.S. society will become pervaded by mistrust as older, more trusting generations are replaced by younger and less trusting generations” (Robinson and Jackson 2001, 141). As Murtin et al. (2018) noted, trust in others and trust in government institutions are closely related, with some authors arguing that institutional quality is critical for trust in others because of the importance of legal or social checks and balances that undergird their trust relations (Murtin et al. 2018). Therefore, under the theoretical argument that is provided by both Murtin et al. (2018) and Robinson and Jackson (2001), trust in government should be expected to decline over time as younger generations slowly replace older generations, which in turn could replace trusting generations. With this generational replacement, trust in government should be relatively low among younger generations and continue to decline over time as they age. Murtin et al. (2018) found that policy determinants that are predominant in influencing one’s trust in government include “perceived government integrity, government reliability and government responsiveness, as well as satisfaction with certain public services, government fairness and perceptions of integration of immigrants” (Murtin et al. 2018, 8). Although age could inflict changes in trust in government over time through shifts in values that occur as generational replacements take place, the way government responds policy issues and serves the U.S. public could also factor the degree of which an individual trust the government more or less than others.

### **Analysis of Postmaterialist Effects of Age on Government Trust from Global Perspectives**

On the global scale, when comparing different nations, the degree to which postmaterialism has an impact on government trust has been ambivalent. A study by Joon (2004) studied the institutional confidence and the presence of postmaterialism in South Korea, and it found that

postmaterialist values are correlated with declining levels of confidence in public institutions (Joon 2004). Thus, the author insisted that the “growing influence of post-materialism accounts for some of the decline in [institutional] confidence” (Joon 2004, 181). Australia serves as another example that helps to explain the direct relationship between age and government trust, as “young people in Australia have shown to have low levels of political trust” and such a trend has been present in other advanced democracies as well (Martin 2014, 4). Moreover, Australia experiences high levels of postmaterialist values in the nation, with the World Values Survey from 1995 indicating that 35 percent of Australians were postmaterialists and only 8 percent of Australians were materialists at the time (Tranter and Western 2003). Thus, as illustrated through these brief comparative examinations, young people actively rally around postmaterialist values that older generations may not subscribe to, which could create a growing sense of distrust towards the government among older generations as their materialist values become less prioritized by younger generations.

While the degree of trust towards the government in the Global South remains low, the data on Latin America provides an intriguing example of which the presence of postmaterialist and materialist values don't always correspond with low government trust among members of the public. In the case of Chile, 76.9 percent of the population in 1990 indicated homosexuality to be unacceptable or unjustifiable, and the percentage dropped to 11.9 percent in 2009 (Navarro et al. 2019). At the same time, same-sex marriages have become legal in many Latin American countries, including Brazil, Chile, and Colombia (Navarro et al. 2019). However, in Chile, despite such a shift in how the public perceives homosexuality in their nation and how the government has responded to such perception in its policy responses, the public's trust in the government of Chile decreased by 28 percentage points from 2007 to 2020, which marks the second largest drop amongst countries in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 2021).



A similar trend was detected in Colombia, despite the shift in the public's perception of homosexuality in the nation. In accordance with the data, Colombia experienced a decrease of 24 percentage points from 2007 to 2018 (OECD 2020). That is not to say that postmaterialist values are not important determinants to consider when measuring government trust in different nations, but these data suggest that shift towards such values should not be presumed to always have positive effects on the government trust in a given country.

### **Hypothesis and Theoretical Argument**

In this paper, I attempt to address the relationship between age and degree of trust towards the government while deploying postmaterialism as a potential, underlying mechanism to examine the role of value shifts and generational replacements on government trust. To help guide the exploration of such a relationship, I establish the following research question: *From a global standpoint, what is the relationship between one's age and their degree of trust towards their government to do what is right?* From here, I hypothesize that *in comparing individuals, the older an individual is, the lower their degree of trust will be in their government to do what is right.* While age is not the only variable that influences one's degree of trust towards their government, the postmaterialist theory functions as a foundation in this paper that provides both direct and indirect linkage of age and government trust. In this paper, I also examine whether the analysis of the data for the United States counterpart is consistent across the Global North and whether it has any stark relevance to the Global South.

The analyses of scholarly literature from preceding sections of this paper posited that younger generations tend to affiliate with postmaterialist values, such as support for freedom of expression, LGBTQ rights, and environmental protection, because they are born and raised in

societies that are more affluent and educated and they are also better equipped and prepared to mobilize in politics when comparing their lifestyles and upbringings with the ones that are experienced by older generations. On the other hand, older generations tend to subscribe to materialist values, such as economic and national security, because they have experienced the effects of armed conflicts and wars that are typically less common among younger generations in advanced democracies. However, because younger generations are actively rallying and mobilizing around political issues that pertain to their postmaterialist values while continuously replacing cohorts of older generations that normally adhere to materialist values, which could pressure the government to increasingly focus on meeting and prioritizing the demands and needs of younger generations that are inherently associated with postmaterialist values. Older generations, especially social conservatives with authoritarian orientations, have reacted to the turnover of their demography, and they are likely to respond to such changes with “growing feelings of resentment at the erosion of respect for their core values and beliefs” (Norris and Inglehart 2019, 123). As these generational replacements occur and younger generations become more vocal about their postmaterialist ideals and values toward the government, one’s degree of trust towards the government should decline as they age. Moreover, younger generations mobilizing around postmaterialist values could mean that governments are pressured by such political mobilization to respond with postmaterialist policies, even though older generations, who are more likely to be materialist and vote in elections, seemingly have a larger voice in deciding who to elect to their governments.

Another perspective that may help to specify the relationship between age and government trust is that as younger generations age, the overall degree of trust towards the government among the population should decline over time, because younger generations generally tend to express

distrust towards and have more demanding standards for the government institutions. Trust towards government in the United States among the general public has been low in recent decades, which could be factored by generational replacement as distrust towards government institutions are becoming more prevalent among younger generations.

## **Data, Variables, and Methodology**

### *Data*

The time series cumulative survey dataset from the American National Election Studies (ANES), which includes data from the years 1948 to 2020, has been used in this research to conduct regression tests for the hypothesis. However, instead of using the full dataset, I have extracted data from the years 2012, 2016, and 2020 from the cumulative dataset for a few reasons. First, a noticeable partisan shift has been present from 2012 to 2020, as Democratic President Barack Obama held his second term from 2013 to 2017, while Republican President Donald Trump held his first term from 2017 to 2021. Furthermore, according to the poll released by the Institute of Politics at Harvard University in Spring 2021, the number young Americans who considered themselves to be politically active increased from 24 percent in 2009 to 36 percent in 2021 (Harvard University 2021). It also found that support for progressive political values have increased in recent years, such as greater support for government health insurance, government's effort to curb climate change, and higher spending towards reducing poverty (Harvard University 2021). Second, extracting data from recent years helps to visualize trends that are more contemporary, as the political environment in 2020 in the U.S., for example, was different from the one that was present in the 1950s. However, considering older datasets that date back to the 20<sup>th</sup> century could create another avenue for historical research on the relevance of age on

government trust. There is a total of 17,886 observations in the data. For each variable that is deployed in this paper, any datapoint that does not have any value or is labeled as 'N/A' has been excluded from the dataset.

In order to test the hypothesis for the global public opinion, I use the World Values Survey's (WVS) data from 2017 to 2020, which consists of survey results from 77 economies around the world. I use this data as it provides insights of political behaviors among individuals at the global scale, when comparing it to the data on the United States from the ANES. There is a total of 119,868 observations for the bivariate regression test that I conducted for the direct relationship between age and government confidence, and there is a total of 52,762 observations for the multivariate regression test considers different control variables. Any datapoint that does not have any value has been excluded from the dataset. I separated all of the 77 economies in the dataset into the Global North and South, which is shown in Appendix A. I referred to pages 121 to 122 of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) *World Economic Outlook* report from April 2023 (International Monetary Fund (IMF) 2023).

#### *Independent and Dependent Variables*

I use age as an independent variable for this research, which is labeled 'VCF0101' in ANES' time series cumulative dataset. The values in the variable range from 17 to 99 and they correspond to the age of a given respondent in the survey conducted by the ANES each year (2012, 2016, and 2020). Datapoints that are labeled '00' have been excluded from the variable, as it used to indicate values that are missing or not applicable. I test this variable against the dependent variable, which is the trust in government index. This dependent variable is labeled 'VCF0656' in the dataset and

it is coded from 0 to 100, in which the higher the number is for a given respondent, the higher degree of trust they will have towards the government. Any data in this variable that is labeled '999' has been removed as it indicates missing/incomplete value for a given datapoint, and the index runs from a scale of 0 to 100.

For the regression tests that are conducted using the WVS dataset, I attempt to utilize variables that have similar context as the ones that I use for the regression tests on the data on the United States. For the dependent variable, I deploy the government confidence variable, which is listed as Q71 on the WVS dataset. This is measured on a 4-point index—that is, it is measured on a scale of 1 (a great deal of confidence in the government) to 4 (no confidence in the government). However, in order to keep the variable consistent with how the government trust variable was measured in the ANES, I recoded the WVS dataset's government confidence on a scale of 0 to 3, in which '0' indicates that the respondent has no confidence in their government and '3' indicates that the respondent has a great deal of confidence in their government. For the independent variable, I deploy the age variable, which is listed as Q262 in the dataset, and it includes respondents whose ages range from 16 to 103. I divided this variable into 5 quintiles—that is, quintile 1 includes a cohort of youngest respondents and quintile 5 includes a cohort of oldest respondents in the dataset—which is then deployed as age groups variable in the regression tests.

### Control Variables

I controlled for a total of five variables from the dataset in the regression test that I conducted for the relationship between age and government trust. The first control variable that I've included in the regression is the year for a given data point, and it measures average degree of trust in 2012, 2016, and 2020. This is included in the regression to explore the general trend of

trust in government among Americans in the United States. In the regression test, coefficients for 2016 and 2020 were compared against the coefficient for 2012. The second variable that has been included in the regression is the party identification of a given individual in the dataset, which is labeled 'VCF0303' in the dataset, and it has been broken down into three categories and they are labeled in the following order: 1) Democrats (including Democratic leaners), 2) Independents, and 3) Republicans (including Republican leaners). In the regression test, I compare Democrats and Republicans against the coefficient for Independents. This variable was included in the regression test to explore impacts of respondent's political/party affiliation on their degrees of trust towards the U.S. government. Keele (2005) finds that "partisans trust government more when their party controls the government," while people who identify as Independents "care little for which party controls the government" (Keele 2005, 884). Keele insisted that such a differences between partisans and Independents exist as partisan view is associated with "the performance of those in office," while authorities and party controls in the government matter little for Independents in general (Keele 2005, 884). The third variable that I included in the regression is the government health insurance scale, which is labeled VCF0806 in the dataset. It measures the respondent's degree of support towards government health insurance on a scale of 1 (support for government insurance plan) to 7 (support for private insurance plan). I excluded datapoints that are labeled '9' or '0' in the variable as they indicate that the values for those datapoints are missing. I included this variable in the regression test since it is directly tied to government policymaking, and I attempt to examine whether the relationship between age and government trust are partly shaped by one's degree of confidence towards government programs, such as government health insurance. In fact, according to a poll from late 2018, 69 percent of young Americans between the ages of 15

and 34 favored a national health plan at the time, although the support were more prominent among young Democrats than young Republicans (Summers 2018).

Given that this paper focuses on the theory of postmaterialism, I utilize two variables that seemingly pertain or tap into to a few of postmaterialist values, which include a thermometer for gays and lesbians (labeled 'VCF0232') and another thermometer for illegal aliens (labeled 'VCF0233'). These variables ask respondents how 'warmly' they feel towards gays, lesbians, and illegal aliens. These thermometers are measured on a scale of 0 to 100, in which the higher the number on the scale indicates the higher the degree of 'warmth' an individual has towards gays, lesbians, and illegal aliens. For both thermometers, I excluded data points with values of 98 and 99 and they indicate that values are missing for those data points. Another variable that has been devised for this research was the degree of racial resentment among respondents, which was created in accordance with the study by Kinder and Sanders (1996). This variable combines four following variables from the ANES dataset, in which they ask the respondent whether they agree or disagree following arguments: 1) Blacks should not have special favors to succeed, 2) Blacks must try harder to succeed, 3) Blacks gotten less than they deserve over the past few years, and 4) conditions make it difficult for Blacks to succeed (Kinder and Sanders 1996). These arguments correspond to the following variables in the ANES dataset: 1) VCF0303, 2) VCF0806, 3) VCF0232, and 4) VCF0233. Each of these variables are measured on a scale of 1 (agree strongly) to 5 (disagree strongly). Thus, these variables make up a variable for racial resentment among respondents, and racial resentment is measured on a scale of 4 (low racial resentment) to 20 (high racial resentment). Through this variable, I attempt to explore the implications of racial resentment among individuals in the United States on their degree of trust towards the government in accordance with their age.

For the regression tests using the WVS dataset, there are 6 variables in total that I deploy as control variables. The first control variable that I use in the regression tests is Q182, which measures whether the respondent of the WVS survey evaluates their acceptance of homosexuality on a scale of 1 (never justifiable) to 10 (always justifiable). The second control variable that I use is Q34, which asks the respondent whether employers should give priority to (nation) people than immigrants. This variable is measured on a 5-point index, with higher number on the index indicating that the respondent disagrees strongly with employers giving priority to (nation) people than immigrants and lower number on the index indicating that they agree strongly with such a statement. The third control variable that I deploy in this research is Q121, which measures the evaluation by the respondent on the impact of immigrants on the development of their country. This variable is also measured on a 5-point index, with higher number indicating that the respondent feels very good about the impacts of immigrants on the development of their country and vice-versa for lower number on the index. The fourth control variable that I use in the regression tests is the health expenditure (% of GDP) of the country of a given respondent. The higher value under this variable corresponds to higher health expenditure in a respondent's country in comparison to countries with lower values under this variable. The fifth control variable that I implement in the regression tests is Q48, which asks the respondent to indicate the extent of which they have freedom of choice and control in their country on a scale of 1 (no freedom of choice and control) to 10 (a great deal of freedom of choice and control). The last control variable that I use in the regression tests is Y001, which measures respondent's association with postmaterialism on a scale of 0 (the respondent is a materialist) to 5 (the respondent is a postmaterialist). All of these variables are deployed to mimic the postmaterialist values and variables that I use for the regression tests for the U.S. counterpart in Table 1, Table 2, and Figure 1. For the distinction



between the Global North and the Global South that I illustrate in Figure 2, I separated 77 economies that are listed in the WVS dataset accordingly into Global North economies and Global South economies, which are specified in Appendix A.

### Methods

I conduct two following statistical tests in this paper to test the hypothesis that was previously identified in this paper: 1) a bivariate regression test that examines the direct relationship between age and government trust and 2) a multivariate regression test that examines the relationship between age and government trust while taking control variables into account. Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression tests have been conducted on R, with the use of data from the years 2012, 2016, and 2020 that are directly extracted from ANES' time series cumulative dataset. The result of bivariate and multivariate regression tests can be found in Table 1 and Table 2, respectively. The P-value, R-squared value (adjusted), and standard error of each variable have been identified and labeled in the results.

I also conduct two statistical tests with the WVS dataset on countries around the world to test the relevance of the hypothesis that I previously proposed in regard to government trust in the United States. I examine a bivariate regression test that examines the direct correlation between age and government confidence, as well as a multivariate regression test that examines such a relationship with control variables. I deploy ordinary least squares (OLS) regression tests on STATA, with the use of data from 2017 to 2020 that are put forth by the WVS' dataset. The result of bivariate and multivariate regression tests can be found in Table 3 and 4, respectively. In accordance with Table 1 and Table 2, the P-value, R-squared value (adjusted), and standard error have been specified in the results.

## Results

**Table 1: Age and Degree of Trust in Government in the United States, 2012-2020**

|                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Age</b>         | -0.080***<br>(0.011) |
| <b>Intercept</b>   | 22.399***<br>(0.576) |
| Observations       | 17,884               |
| Adjusted R-squared | 0.003                |

\*\*\*p<0.01; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.1. Standard errors in parentheses.

Table 1 presents the bivariate regression result for the relationship between age and trust in the U.S. government. The result shows that in general, for every unit increase in one's age, their degree of trust towards the government decreases by 0.08. While this relationship result is statistically significant, a low adjusted R-squared value of 0.003 indicates that the variable for age does not adequately explain the variable for government trust. Thus, the fit of variables in the regression is poor, although the statistical significance in the model indicates that my hypothesis for the relationship between age and government trust holds true in the regression—that is, the older an individual is, the lower degree of trust they will have towards the U.S. government to do what is right. However, the model does not consider external factors that could influence the relationship between age and government trust, such as variables that describe some of the postmaterialist values among younger generations.

**Table 2: Age and Degree of Trust in Government (with Control Variables) in the United States, 2012-2020**

|                                                 |                      |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Age</b>                                      | -0.043***<br>(0.012) |
| <b>Racial Resentment</b>                        | -0.253***<br>(0.056) |
| <b>Average Degree of Trust in Govt. in 2016</b> | -6.411***            |

|                                                              |                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
|                                                              | (0.550)              |
| <b>Average Degree of Trust in Govt. in 2020</b>              | -6.687***<br>(0.485) |
| <b>Party Identification (Democrats, including leaners)</b>   | 4.816***<br>(0.683)  |
| <b>Party Identification (Republicans, including leaners)</b> | 1.735**<br>(0.701)   |
| <b>Government Health Insurance Scale</b>                     | 0.017<br>(0.119)     |
| <b>Thermometer: Gays and Lesbians</b>                        | -0.021**<br>(0.008)  |
| <b>Thermometer: Illegal Aliens</b>                           | 0.073***<br>(0.009)  |
| <b>Intercept</b>                                             | 21.973***<br>(1.436) |
| Observations                                                 | 13,994               |
| Adjusted R-squared                                           | 0.039                |

\*\*\*p<0.01; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.1. Standard errors in parentheses.

Figure 1: Predicted Values of Trust in Government Index (Multiple Regression)

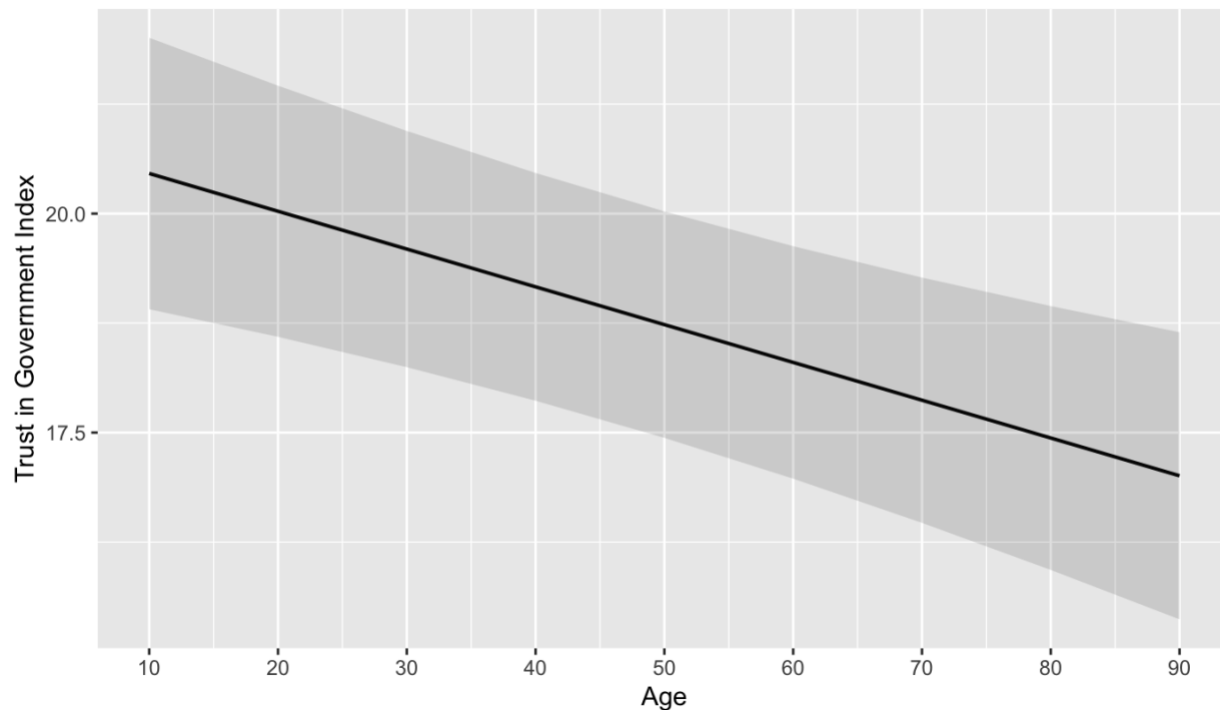
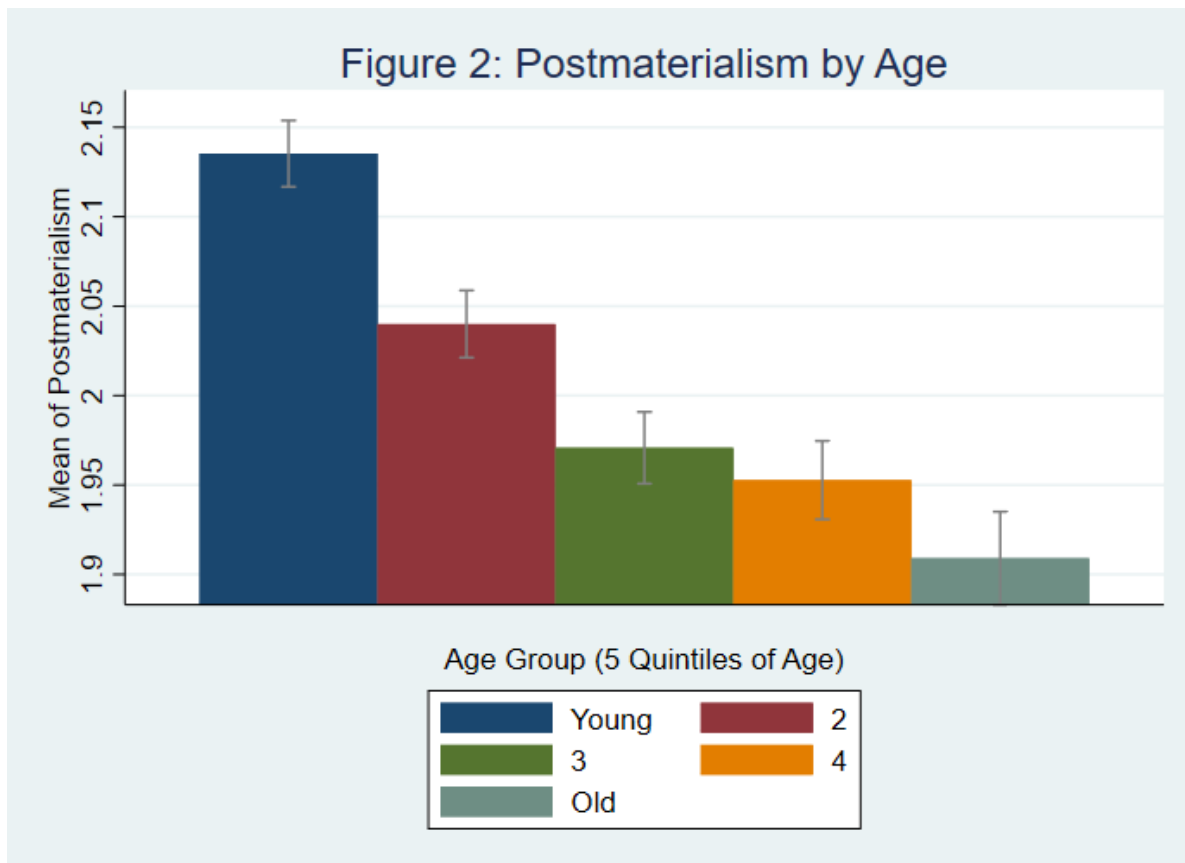


Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between government trust and age when taking control variables from Table 2 into account. In general, the data on years 2012, 2016, and 2020 from the ANES shows that when control variables from Table 2 are taken into account, older age cohorts tend to have lower trust in the U.S. government than younger age cohorts. However, Figure 1 also indicates that, in general, there is a low trust in the government among the U.S. public, as it hovered below 30 points out of 100 points scale. While Figure 1 shows that the residuals for government trust for each age are substantial, the trust in government maintained a negative trajectory when examining the responses from younger to older age cohorts, which is consistent with the linear regression analysis in Table 1.

Table 2 illustrates a multivariate regression test between age and government trust while controlling for other variables, such as ones that explain some of the postmaterialist values. The multivariate regression test indicates that in general, for every one-year increase in one's age, their degree of trust in the government decreases by 0.043. Compared to the bivariate regression result from Table 1, the multivariate regression in Table 2 presents that the correlation between age and government is less robust, given the smaller coefficient for age in Table 2 in comparison to the one shown in Table 1. This relationship was statistically significant, although a low adjusted R-squared value of 0.039 suggests a poor fit of variables in the model. The adjusted R-squared value is improved in comparison to the bivariate regression test, but the number continues to remain low. Table 2 also finds that all of the control variables except government health insurance scale have a statistically significant relationship with one's degree of trust towards the government. From the years 2012 to 2020, individuals who identify themselves as Democrats were more likely than Republicans to trust the government. Table 2 illustrates that both Democrats and Republicans have

expressed positive relationship with government trust, although they trust the government to a different extent, as their coefficients vary from one another.

Table 2 also includes variables that explain some of the postmaterialist values, which include thermometers for 1) gays and lesbians and 2) illegal aliens. The regression result finds that in general, for every unit increase in one's degree of warmth towards gays and lesbians, their degree of trust in government decreases by 0.021. However, on the other hand, the regression result also finds that for every unit increase in one's degree of warmth towards illegal aliens, their degree of trust in government increases by 0.073. This could imply that there are different proportions of people from both younger and older generations that have different degrees of warmth towards gays, lesbians, and illegal aliens overall.



**Table 3: Age and Confidence in Government in Global Context, 2017-2020**

|                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Age Groups</b>  | 0.009***<br>(0.002) |
| <b>Intercept</b>   | 1.293***<br>(0.006) |
| Observations       | 119,868             |
| Adjusted R-squared | 0.000               |

\*\*\*p<0.01; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.1. Standard errors in parentheses.

Figure 2 visualizes means of postmaterialist index among different age groups in the data. The illustration shows that younger age groups tend to lean towards postmaterialist values than older generation counterparts. With this in mind, Table 3 identifies the result for the bivariate regression test of the relationship between age and government confidence in a global context. The regression considers data from countries around the world, from both the Global North and the Global South. Table 3 finds that, in general, at a global scale, there's an increase of 0.009 units in government confidence for every one-unit increase in the age group. This relationship was statistically significant, although it does not consider any other exogenous or endogenous conditions. However, the regression result from Table 3 is not consistent with the regression result that was found through the data on the U.S.—that is, the result shown in Table 3 presents a trend that is opposite of what was shown in the U.S. context in Table 1, Table 2, and Figure 1.

**Table 4: Age and Confidence in Govt. (with Control Variables) in Global Context, 2017-2020**

|                                     |                      |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Age Groups</b>                   | 0.033***<br>(0.004)  |
| <b>Global North</b>                 | 0.385***<br>(0.028)  |
| <b>Global North x Age Groups</b>    | -0.032***<br>(0.008) |
| <b>Homosexuality is Justifiable</b> | -0.012***<br>(0.002) |

|                                                                   |                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Employers should give priority to (nation) people than immigrants | 0.007<br>(0.004)     |
| Impact of immigrants on the development of the country            | 0.092***<br>(0.004)  |
| Health Expenditure (% of GDP)                                     | -0.095***<br>(0.002) |
| How much freedom of choice and control                            | 0.015***<br>(0.002)  |
| Post-Materialist Index                                            | -0.069***<br>(0.004) |
| Intercept                                                         | 1.704***<br>(0.024)  |
| Observations                                                      | 52,762               |
| Adjusted R-squared                                                | 0.085                |

\*\*\*p<0.01; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.1. Standard errors in parentheses.

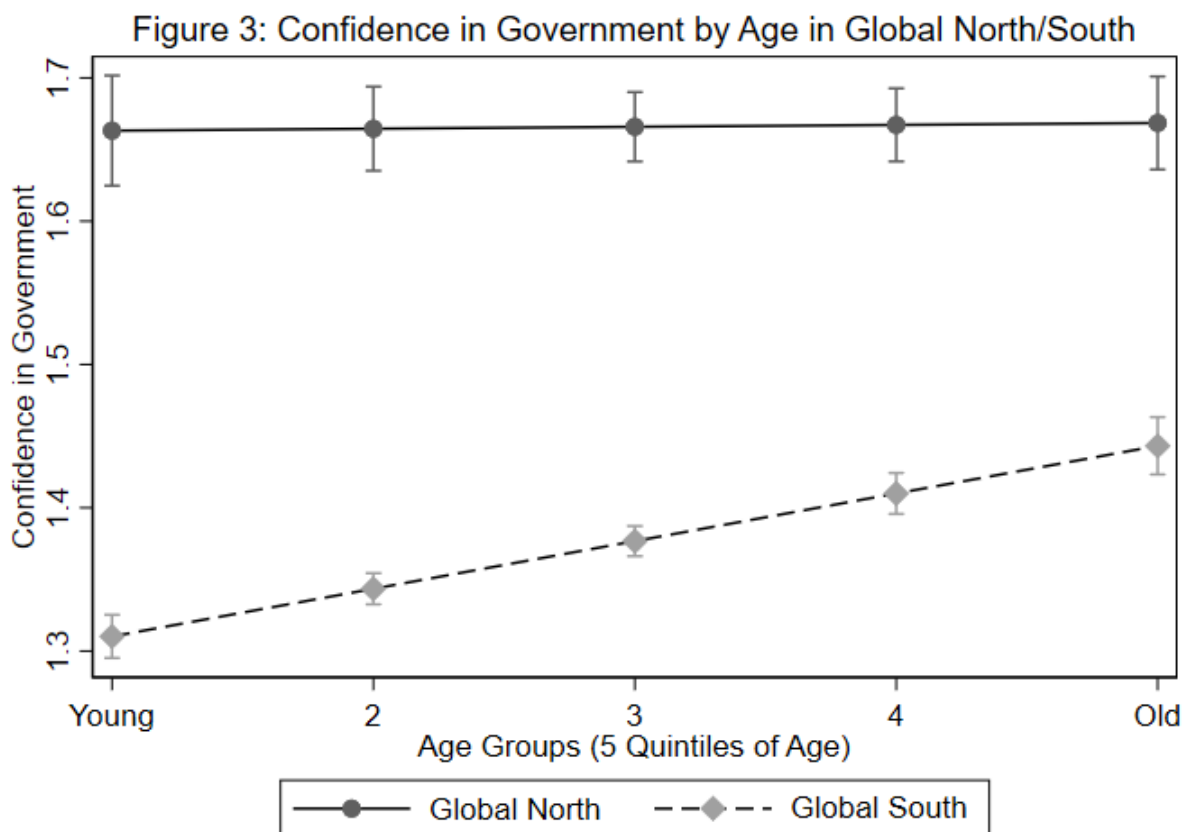


Figure 3 represents the relationship between age and government confidence in the Global North and the Global South based on the interaction term that was specified in the multivariate regression test in Table 4. Figure 3 finds that in general, when control variables are taken into account, one's degree of confidence in their government increases in accordance with their age. Thus, from a global perspective, government confidence increases alongside with age in both the Global North and the Global North, although the former maintains higher confidence than the latter. However, the Global South experiences higher increments of government confidence as age increases in comparison to the Global North counterpart. As indicated in Table 4, these relationships are statistically significant.

While Table 4 and Figure 3 is not consistent with the analysis of the regression test for the data on the U.S. and my hypothesis, there are few highlights to consider. The relationship between the postmaterialism and government confidence variables presented an inverse relationship. In other words, for every one-unit increase in postmaterialism, one's confidence towards their government decreases by 0.069 units. Moreover, for every one-unit increase in one's acceptance towards homosexuality, their confidence towards their government decreases by 0.012 units. These results indicate that postmaterial values, such as one's openness towards homosexuality, are statistically significant components in determining one's trust/confidence in their government to do what is right. However, the results find that from a global perspective, both the Global North and the Global South have increasing trajectories of government confidence in accordance with age, which is not present in the regression test that was conducted for the U.S. counterpart. At the same time, Figure 3 posits that while the Global North maintains higher government confidence among older generations in comparison to the Global South counterpart, the coefficient that presents the relationship between one's age and their government confidence remains smaller than



the Global South counterpart. Thus, given the low coefficient in the relationship between age and government confidence in the Global North, the implications of decreasing trust in government in the U.S. among older generations cannot be taken out of the equation in explaining the conditions that explain the small slope for increase in government confidence for every one-unit increase in age.

**Table 5: Age and Confidence in Govt. (with Control Variables) in Global Context, 2017-2020**

|                                                                          |                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Age Groups</b>                                                        | 0.038***<br>(0.005)  |
| <b>Global North</b>                                                      | 0.387***<br>(0.054)  |
| <b>Global North x Age Groups</b>                                         | -0.062***<br>(0.015) |
| <b>Homosexuality is Justifiable</b>                                      | -0.013***<br>(0.004) |
| <b>Age Groups x Homosexuality is Justifiable</b>                         | -0.002<br>(0.001)    |
| <b>Global North x Homosexuality is Justifiable</b>                       | -0.002<br>(0.008)    |
| <b>Global North x Age Groups x Homosexuality is Justifiable</b>          | -0.007**<br>(0.002)  |
| <b>Employers should give priority to (nation) people than immigrants</b> | 0.006<br>(0.004)     |
| <b>Impact of immigrants on the development of the country</b>            | 0.092***<br>(0.004)  |
| <b>Health Expenditure (% of GDP)</b>                                     | -0.095***<br>(0.002) |
| <b>How much freedom of choice and control</b>                            | 0.015***<br>(0.002)  |
| <b>Post-Materialist Index</b>                                            | -0.701***<br>(0.004) |
| <b>Intercept</b>                                                         | 1.714***             |

|                    |         |
|--------------------|---------|
|                    | (0.026) |
| Observations       | 52,762  |
| Adjusted R-squared | 0.086   |

\*\*\*p<0.01; \*\*p<0.05; \*p<0.1. Standard errors in parentheses.

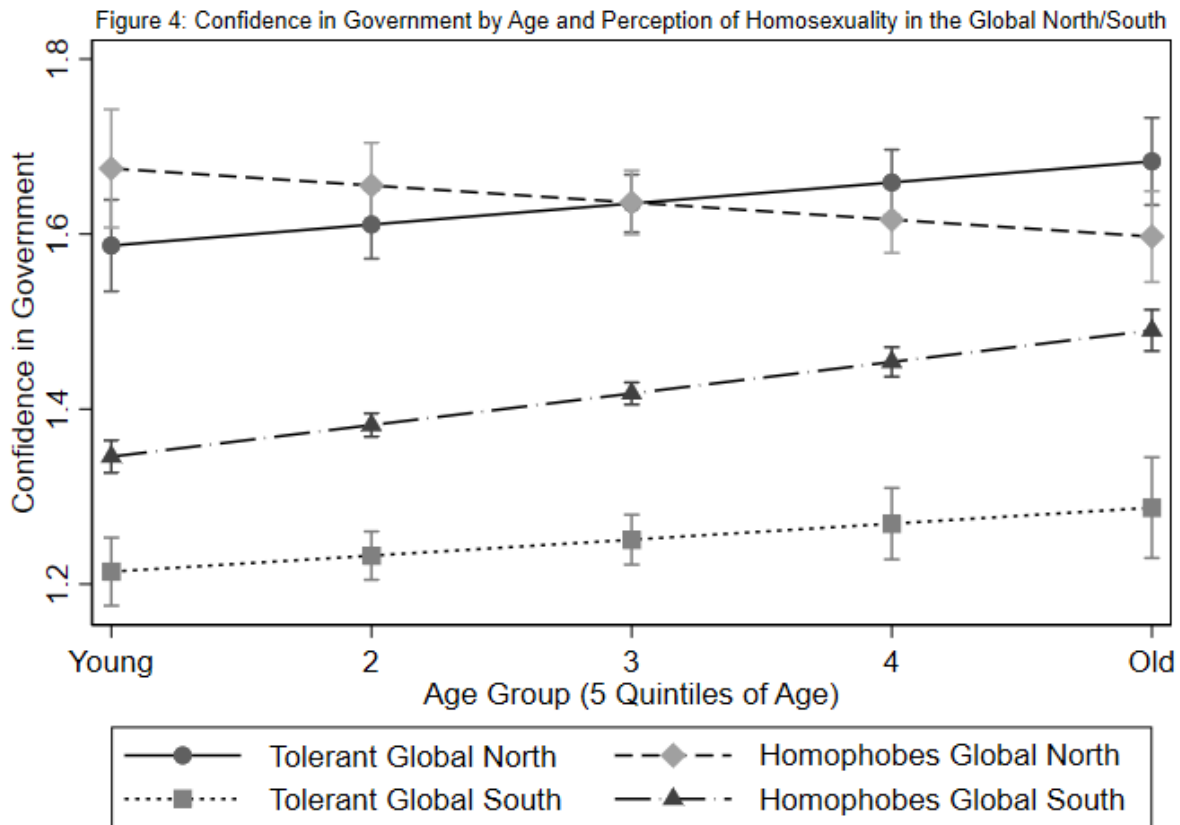


Table 5 conducts a multivariate regression test that is similar to the one deployed in Table 4. Table 5 includes all of the variables from Table 4, *as well as* an interaction variable consisting of the age group variable, Global North/South variable, and homosexuality perception variable. Previously, Table 4 and Figure 3 found that, in general, economies in the Global North exhibited higher public confidence in government than the Global South counterparts. However, Figure 4 shows that, in general, older generations from economies in Global North and South who express tolerance toward homosexuality are more likely to have a greater confidence in their governments than younger generation counterparts. Figure 4 also finds that older generations from economies

in Global South who express intolerance toward homosexuality are more likely to have a greater confidence in their governments than younger generation counterparts. On the other hand, older generations from economies in Global North who express tolerance toward homosexuality are more likely to have less confidence in their governments than younger generation counterparts, which is consistent with my hypothesis that older generations trust their governments less than the younger generation counterparts; however, my hypothesis only holds true for older generations in the Global North who are intolerant toward homosexuality, since other trends in Figure 4 fails to support my hypothesis.

### **Discussion, Conclusion, and Implications**

This paper explored the relationship between one's age and their degree of trust in their government and examined implications of postmaterialist theory on confidence among younger and older generations in the government to do what is right. I argued that the older an individual is, the lower degree of trust they will have towards their government. The underlying argument was that younger generations are slowly replacing older birth cohorts, which also inflicts a replacement of traditional and materialist values of older generations as younger age cohorts have become more politically engaged and have better economic stability than older generation counterparts. Harris et al. (2010) insisted that many young people have social and political concerns and would like their voices to be heard by politicians and take part in the "processes of deliberation within traditional structures of politics that currently marginalize youth," although the authors also finds that young people "eschew" traditional participation in politics (Harris et al. 2010, 28). Inglehart and Norris (2000) argued that a "pervasive cultural shift" among younger generations toward postmaterialist values "has increased the salience of issues such as

reproductive choice, sexual harassment in the workplace, and equal opportunities” (Inglehart and Norris 2000, 446). There have been increasing levels of support and mobilization among younger generations around postmaterialist values that have begun to shift away from an emphasis on economic and physical security that older generations (or ‘materialists’) have worried about during their lifetime. Over time, as such shifts from materialist toward postmaterialist values took place, “massive differences between the values of young and old that were present in 1970 have dwindled,” although people that had been born prior to World War II continue to exhibit a greater emphasis on materialist values than younger generation counterpart, which had been case in advanced economies like Western European countries (Inglehart 2008, 145). In this research paper, I attempted to examine whether postmaterialist values, such as openness to foreigners and LGBTQ values, have any effect towards the relationship between one’s age and their degree of trust towards the U.S. government to do what is right.

While the results exhibited a poor fit of variables in the regression tests, they found that an increase in one’s age is correlated with a decrease in their trust in the U.S. government to do what is right, given the statistical significance of the relationship, which supports my hypothesis. Moreover, variables that illustrate thermometers for one’s degree of ‘warmth’ towards gays, lesbians, and illegal aliens have also shown to have a statistical significance when they were held as controls for the multivariate regression test of the relationship between age and government trust. Therefore, one’s openness toward LGBTQ values, immigrants, and foreigners, which can be associated with postmaterialist values that are generally subscribed by younger generations, could have an impact in one’s degree of trust towards the U.S. government to do what is right. However, at the same time, the regression results have also shown that one’s party identification also matters in determining their degree of trust towards the government, which could imply that their degree

of trust is affected by which party is leading the majority in the government institutions like the U.S. Congress and the executive branch and agencies.

Even though this research finds that one's age can be associated with the extent of which they trust the U.S. government to do what is right, it does not necessarily imply that older people simply don't trust the government in general. There could be other underlying factors that explain help to explain trust towards the U.S. government among older age cohorts. Future research could potentially involve extended examinations of specific policy positions that younger and older generations stand on 'postmaterialist' issues or topics, which could be insightful in understanding whether older or younger generations demand more legislative work on certain policy areas. Future research could also involve studies on the effects of gender and religion on trust and confidence towards the U.S. government among younger and older age cohorts and explore legislative effectiveness of the U.S. government in policy areas that pertain to postmaterialist values of younger generations. However, from a broader standpoint, the studies that overview postmaterialist effects on the relationship between one's age and their degree of trust in the U.S. government has been somewhat limited. Therefore, a further study on the topic that was explored in this paper could provide an insightful outlook of perception of the U.S. government among younger and older generations.

This research also considered the government trust among younger and older generations across the nations in the Global North and the Global South and found that there is an increasing trajectory in government confidence in accordance with increases in the age variable, which contradicts the hypothesis and the findings of the regression tests for the U.S. counterpart. However, given that the regression tests that were put forth in this research examines the relationship between age and government confidence in countries in the Global North and the

Global South at a macroscopic level, they do not take into account of how well the government serves the member of the public, since such a factor can vary widely across the nations. As noted in the study by Christensen and Lægreid (2005), trust in government is correlated to the degree of satisfaction with public services among citizens in a given country—that is, when people are satisfied with what they receive from public services, such as public health and employment services, they are more likely to trust public institutions more than citizens who are not satisfied with public services (Christensen and Lægreid 2005). At the same time, countries around the world generally exhibit low confidence in government among the members of the public. Such a trend creates a concern for a reversal effect where low government trust across the nations can influence their capability to serve both younger and older populations. Marien and Hooghe (2011) suggest that “low levels of political trust can undermine the effective governing of a society and carry with them a potential threat for the functioning of democratic processes” (Marien and Hooghe 2011, 282). Thus, low trust in government institutions among the members of the public could alter or deteriorate the governments’ ability to engage in effective policymaking processes. Future research could potentially comparatively examine major economies in the Global South and the Global North and consider the impacts of low government trust on policy outcomes and their effects on how younger and older generations perceive public institutions.

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## Appendix A

**Countries Listed Under the Global North and the Global South in Table 4, Figure 3, and Figure 4**

For this research, the Global ‘North’ and ‘South’ have been divided into advanced/developed economies and emerging/developing economies respectively. The information on whether a given economy is in its developed or developing state is based on pages 121-124 of the International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) World Economic Outlook report from April 2023.

*Global ‘North’ – Advanced/Developed Economies*

Andorra, Australia, Austria, Taiwan, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Iceland, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Lithuania, Macau, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Puerto Rico\*\*\*, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and United States.

*Global ‘South’ – Emerging/Developing Economies*

Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belarus, Brazil, Bulgaria, Myanmar, Chile, China, Colombia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Georgia, Guatemala, Hungary, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Montenegro, Nicaragua, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Vietnam, Zimbabwe, Tajikistan, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, and Egypt.

\*\*\*The IMF’s World Economic Outlook Database (April 2023) does not include Puerto Rico. However, for this research, since it is a United States territory, it will be labeled under the Global ‘North’ (Advanced/Developed Economies) alongside the United States.

## Appendix B

**Descriptive Statistics of the Trust in Government Index Variable from Table 1, Table 2, and Figure 1 (R Output)**

Minimum: 0

1<sup>st</sup> Quintile: 0

Median: 0

Mean: 18.35

3<sup>rd</sup> Quintile: 25

Maximum: 100

**Descriptive Statistics of the Age Variable from Table 1, Table 2, and Figure 1 (R Output)**

Minimum: 17

1<sup>st</sup> Quintile: 36

Median: 51

Mean: 50.42

3<sup>rd</sup> Quintile: 64

Maximum: 90

**Descriptive Statistics of the Government Confidence Variable from Table 3, Table 4, Table 5, Figure 3, and Figure 4 (STATA Output)**

Observation: 120,468

Mean: 1.319778

Standard Deviation: 0.9508678

Minimum: 0

Max: 3

**Descriptive Statistics of the Age Group Variable (5 Quintiles of Age) from Table 3, Table 4, Table 5, Figure 3, and Figure 4 (STATA Output)**

Observation: 124,214

Mean: 2.979503

Standard Deviation: 1.414088

Minimum: 1

Maximum: 5

**Descriptive Statistics of the Age Variable from Table 3, Table 4, Table 5, Figure 3, and Figure 4 (STATA Output)**

Observation: 124,214

Mean: 45.65832

Standard Deviation: 17.263

Minimum: 16

Maximum: 103