WHAT MAKES OR BREAKS POLITICAL TRUST

A fixed effects regression analysis of changes in political trust within individuals in the Netherlands between 2008 and 2018.

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Abstract

Political trust is understood as citizens' trust in a set of actors and institutions. Citizens evaluate whether to grant or withhold trust based on previous experiences with actors like the government. Long thought to be important for regime stability, political trust has been studied extensively. The literature can successfully explain differences in political trust between countries but has fewer explanations for differences between and especially within citizens. This thesis examines what can explain differences in political trust in Dutch LISS panel respondents between 2008 and 2018 using individual fixed effects regression analysis to examine panel data on 22801 respondents. In order to find out to what extent changes in an individual's economic position and cultural status can explain differences in political trust in Dutch citizens. Building on precarious work theory to measure someone's economic insecurity and using cultural capital to measure someone's cultural status, this thesis hopes to provide a new theoretical perspective on what can explain differences in political trust at the micro-level. Moreover, utilizing a longitudinal design, the traditional explanations of political trust were examined in a different way than is ordinarily done. The analysis shows that cultural capital is not good at explaining changes in political trust and that economic insecurity explains some changes in political trust but is not as convincing when considering changes in corruption perception and economic performance. The main conclusion is that the conventional explanations also explain changes in political trust within individuals

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List of abbreviations and Acronyms

1. Longitudinal Studies for the Social Sciences Panel (LISS panel)
2. Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
3. Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)
4. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)
5. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS)
6. correlated random effects approach (RCE).

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1. Introduction

While most citizens in liberal democracies support democracy as a system, trust in politicians, political parties, and the government is notably lower and varies highly over time between countries and individuals (Van der Meer & Hakhverdian, 2017). Political science has tried to understand why some citizens are more trusting than others for a long time, as political trust was thought to be key to maintaining the stability and legitimacy of democracy as a system (Van der Meer, 2017). With its most basic definition, trust is understood as a situational and relational concept based on a value judgment, most succinctly described as "A trust B to do X" (Hardin, 1999). Political trust is understood similarly - it represents the evaluations and orientation towards institutions and actors with which citizens have a trust relationship (Norris, 2017). When citizens evaluate the political actors and institutions positively, they trust them; when they evaluate them negatively, they withhold that trust (Hakhverdian & Mayne, 2012). While there is consensus around trust as an evaluation, there are conflicting views on which aspects citizens evaluate the trustworthiness of their political actors and institutions (Van der Meer & Hakhverdian, 2017). This thesis aims to add to the literature on political trust by examining how and what explains changes in political trust over time in Dutch respondents of the LISS panel. In this introduction, I will first outline the research problem, and then I will expand on what this thesis aims to contribute to the literature on political trust and the societal relevance

1.1 Explaining political trust

Political trust is currently understood as a citizen's evaluation of a set of political actors and institutions. Two main factors, procedural fairness and economic performance, are thought to play a critical role in this evaluation and thus explain the majority of differences in political trust (Van der Meer, 2017).

Firstly, procedural fairness or whether the government and decision-makers produce results in a fair way. Procedural fairness is thought to be the primary driver of political trust. The fairness of the electoral system and the degree to which politics are corrupt are seen as the key determining factors for citizens' perception of political fairness (Van der Meer, 2017). Secondly, (macro) economic performance is thought to explain the fluctuations in political trust. Citizens are thought to evaluate a government's economic performance based on an assessment of the state of the economy. If the economy is doing well, for example, GDP is growing, they trust the government. If they think the government is doing bad, they distrust the government economy (Van der Meer & Hakhverdian, 2017). While these explanations work to explain cross-national differences, they do not explain the variation of political trust between citizens within countries sufficiently (De Blok, Van der Meer & Van der Brug, 2022). In theory, citizens in the Netherlands experience roughly similar levels of corruption, vote under the same electoral rules and evaluate the same economy. However, political trust varies significantly from individual to individual. As trust is a relational and situational concept, in which citizens grant or withhold trust, this thesis argues that we need to examine the differences in citizens' situations and experiences to better explain why some individuals have more political trust and others are more distrusting. In the study of political behavior, theories about citizens' economic circumstances and cultural explanations are thought to drive voting behavior and political participation (Kriesi et al., 2006; Monticelli & Bassoli, 2019). However, these new frameworks are not yet applied in political trust research.

As stated earlier, the conventional theory about the relationship between the economy and political trust argues that individuals evaluate a government's economic performance based on an assessment of the state of the country's economy (Mishler & Rose, 2001). This conventional approach neglects how individuals experience economic reality. Because when someone lives paycheck to paycheck, is economically insecure because they have a 0-hour contract, or cannot afford rising rent; they might evaluate economic performance negatively, even if the economy as a whole is growing (Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi, 2009). In the study of labor relations, the economy and voting behavior, scientists have identified a growing group of workers that, despite having paid work, struggle to make ends meet. Due to globalization, deregulation, and automation, people are increasingly easily replaced, resulting in a problematically economically insecure group that is underrepresented by establishment politicians (Kalleberg & Vallas, 2018). These developments, in turn, lead to different voting behavior (Marx & Picot, 2013). I expect this might also influence the extent to which people trust or distrust politics. The more precarious someone's economic position, the more unlikely they evaluate the government's economic performance positively.

A similar argument can be made about the relationship between political culture and political trust. Cultural explanations for political trust were important in earlier decades of research but are now largely dismissed (Van der Meer & Zmerli, 2017). However, in the study of voting behavior, cultural explanations are thought to be the fundamental explanation behind changing voting patterns and the rise of new political parties (Kriesi et al., 2006; Norris & Verba, 2019). If political trust reflects an evaluation and orientation towards political institutions, and politics cannot be understood without cultural explanations. In that case, we also need to consider cultural explanations to understand what determines political trust. Therefore, I would like to bring culture back, building on Noordzij, Van der Waal & De Koster. (2019). They argue that differences in political trust between lower and higher educated can be attributed to a cultural conflict. This conflict has higher-status individuals with cosmopolitan and liberal values on one side and people with material values and lower cultural capital on the other side. Politicians often belong to the first group and display high-status signals by looking down on certain values and attitudes. The high-status signals of establishment politicians incite opposition in low-status groups who feel their attitudes and outlooks are looked down upon (Noordzij, Van der Waal & De Koster, 2019). As an example of establishment politicians looking down on certain values and attitudes, think of Hillary Clinton calling Trump supporters "a basket of deplorables" (Reilly, 2016). I expect that differences in individual political trust might be better explained by taking their cultural position into account. A politician who signals similar cultural values might be evaluated as trustworthy. In contrast, a politician that signals they are on the other side of the cultural conflict might be viewed as someone to be distrusted. To test these theories, this thesis will look at how trust changes over time in Dutch citizens using the following research question.

To what extent can differences in individuals' cultural positions and economic situations explain differences in political trust in the Netherlands between 2008 and 2018?

By looking at what determines changes in political trust over time, I plan to answer what explains differences in individuals' political trust. More specifically, whether individuals' economic circumstances and cultural position can better explain differences in political trust than procedural fairness and economic performance. This will be examined by performing a fixed effects regression analysis using LISS (Longitudinal Internet Studies for the Social Sciences) panel data, a highly representative panel administered by CentERdata (Tilburg University, The Netherlands).

1.2 Scientific relevance

This thesis aims to add to the literature on political trust in three ways. Firstly, this thesis will consider an individual's economic outlook and insecurity, building on precarious work theory and its political consequences. While macro-economic performance and income and their relationship with political trust are thoroughly tested, results are mixed (Van der Meer, 2018). By taking precariousness into account, this thesis will provide a more up-to-date perspective on economics, economic insecurity, and its relationship with political trust. Secondly, this thesis will add to the literature on trust as an evaluation by bringing cultural explanations back in, building on Noordzij, Van der Waal & De Koster (2019). This thesis will test the status-based cultural conflict theory both over time and while controlling for other theories on political trust, which is a first. Thirdly, this thesis will utilize a longitudinal design using fine-grained micro-level data to capture changes in individuals' political trust over time. By doing so, this thesis will do a more comprehensive analysis of political trust at the micro-level than is ordinarily done in the literature, as most articles on political trust either use cross-national designs or aggregated country-level longitudinal analysis to examine what explains differences in political trust. A longitudinal study on the micro-level will therefore be a valuable addition and add to the understanding of differences in political trust in individuals.

1.3 Societal relevance

In a democratic system of government, the public's trust in political actors and institutions plays an important role, conferring legitimacy on representatives and government. Distrust is also an essential signal in established democracies, for when things go wrong in politics but trust is maintained, how will the system self-correct (Van der Meer, 2017)? Moreover, political trust is important for governments' ability to operate effectively, as laws and regulations by a government that is trusted can expect better adherence by its citizens (Tyler & De Cremer, 2009). The experiences during the pandemic years, the struggle with climate change adaption, and Russia's war in Ukraine and its potential consequences underline the importance of coordinated collective action without resorting to coercion. Citizens could also benefit from a government better understanding what shapes the relationship with their citizens and how to improve these relationships. In other words, it is in the interest of both policymakers and citizens to have a better grasp of political trust and its determinants.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

After having introduced the gap in current political trust literature, the research question, and the aims of this thesis in this introductory chapter, I will define political trust in the second chapter, additionally giving an overview of the past and current literature on political trust as an evaluation. After which, I will discuss theories on precariousness and politics and how they translate to political trust and discuss theories on political trust in relation to the status-based cultural conflict. The methods, data, and operationalization will be discussed in the third chapter. In chapter 4, the results of the analysis will be presented, some indicators for precariousness have a significant effect on political trust. However, the traditional explanations remain the best explanation for political trust. In chapter 5, I will answer the research question, discuss the findings and suggest avenues for future research.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Definition of political trust

In both popular culture and academic literature, ideas about political support such as political trust, satisfaction with democracy, democratic values and systems support are often muddied and, to a certain extent, even used interchangeably (Norris, 2017). While all these concepts are related, they measure substantively different aspects of what Easton (1975) called “system support”. In order to properly measure and thoughtfully discuss a concept like political trust, we therefore need to define it. In this thesis, I will build on the work of Easton and Norris to define political trust.

Easton (1975) understood system support as a reflection of orientations toward the nation-state, its agencies, and actors. Where orientations are positive, citizens accept the legitimacy of their state within its territorial boundaries. Easton classified the concept of system support or "political support" as a multidimensional phenomenon ranging from the most diffuse to the most specific levels. The more defuse levels of support represent orientations towards more overarching concepts such as belonging to or supporting a common nation, for example believing to be part of a specific community, or approval of regime principles and values such as support for, or adherence, to principles and normative values upon which the regime is founded (Norris, 2017). For example, beliefs about the legitimacy of the constitutional arrangements and the formal and informal rules of the game, such as democracy and the rule of law. These more defuse concepts are captured in measures such as satisfaction with democracy and democratic values (Norris, 2017).

Within the continuum of system support, political trust represents the most specific system support, namely the evaluations and orientations towards institutions and actors with which citizens have a trust relationship. Political trust concerns the trust and confidence in incumbent office holders, core institutions of the state, such as the legislature, the executive, political parties, and public sector agencies, such as the police and civil services (Norris, 2017). Individuals have a more dynamic and "evaluative" relationship with these objects of specific support, for example, the government, than with concepts related to diffuse support, such as the support of democracy as a system. Empirical findings also support this distinction – while support for democratic principles is stable and widespread in democracies, political trust is volatile and in some countries in decline (Van der Meer, 2017).

Specific support and political trust are therefore more in line with how people use trust or distrust in daily conversation when compared to system support. Nevertheless, while everyone knows instinctively what trust is, we do not often think about how trust works. The nature of trust is perhaps best illustrated with an example. Suppose a person's car has broken down and it is not something he or she can remedy at home, so they are dependent on a car mechanic to fix it. The person visits a car garage to get a proper assessment of what is wrong and trusts them to fix it. If he or she immediately fixed the car for a decent price, the person will most likely judge them as trustworthy. If the car keeps running into problems despite it being serviced recently, the person will think twice before trusting them with the car again, and chances are that this person will look for a different garage. It is the interaction between the customer and the car mechanic that eventually determines the trust of the customer in the car mechanic. After this experience, the car owner trusts the car mechanic with his/her car. However, the qualities that make them trustworthy in that context do not automatically make them trustworthy in other areas. For example, the mechanic will not be trusted to be an excellent primary school teacher that one can entrust with the education of their kids (Van Gorp, 2020).

What we can learn from this example is that trust is a relational and situational concept, based on a value judgment, of a person or institution in the context of a vulnerability. It is relational because it generally involves an individual, the trusting party, that is vulnerable or dependent on another individual, group, or institution, the trustee (Levi & Stoker, 2000). In the context of trust, vulnerability is understood in the following way -an individual expects or needs something from the other that they cannot provide themself. However, the person cannot be certain about the future behavior of the trustee, and this makes them vulnerable. Therefore, they make a value judgment on whether they "trust'' that the other will do what we need (Levi & Stoker, 2000). This judgment is usually based on past interactions we have had with the trustee, further underlining the relational aspect of trust. Moreover, this trust is situational because what inspires trust in one situation does not result in the same trust in other situations. In sum, trust could be expressed as 'A trusts B to do X' (Hardin, 1999; Hakhverdian & Mayne, 2012)

Applying this conception of trust to the context of politics, political trust is the result of citizens evaluating the objects of political trust, the relationship with them and their previous interactions (Van der Meer, 2017). Citizens are vulnerable to the policies of a range of government institutions- examples of which include local government, the civil service, the legal system, political parties, parliament, the police, judges, and politicians (Hakhverdian & Mayne, 2012, p. 740). While all these institutions shape the daily lives of citizens, citizens are perhaps most vulnerable to the political institutions lying at the heart of contemporary democratic life – Parliament, Government, political parties and politicians - tend to be the focus of the political trust in the long line of research in comparative politics (Hakhverdian & Mayne, 2012, p. 740). Take, for example, a pension system reform, taken up by a party and eventually government. Not only does a pension reform or change impact when you retire, it might impact your monthly net income before and after retirement. The larger the exposure to an institution, the more relevant the trust relationship is to determine whether a citizen needs to constantly monitor its behavior or not (Van der Meer, 2017). Keeping all this in mind, political trust can be defined as a value judgment by a citizen. A citizen evaluates the nature of political actors and institutions, and the relationship the citizen has with those actors. Do I trust them to do the right thing, or do I distrust them, and should I pay more attention to their actions and perhaps even take action against them through voting and protests? Viewing political trust as a value judgment also means, against the consensus of early political trust research, that political trust is not an inherently 'good' thing. Blindly trusting a politician who threatens democratic integrity to do the right thing is not only naïve but might even be dangerous if it inspires inaction (Norris, 2017).

2.2 The trust "crisis" and developments in the political trust literature

In the aftermath of the second world war, there was a general concern for the stability of liberal democracy. Political scientists started investigating regime stability's structural conditions (Van der Meer & Zmerli, 2017, p. 6). The eventual consensus was that favorable attitudes to regime principles, institutions and actors played a crucial role in maintaining democracy; therefore, high levels of political trust were seen as vital (Almond & Verba, 2015; Easton, 1975). At the first signs of a downward trend in political trust in the '70s, there was an immediate sense of crisis and politicians and political scientists alike voiced their fear for the future of democracy (Van der Meer & Zmerli, 2017, p. 6). The dissatisfaction with- and lack of confidence in the functioning of the institutions at that time were thought to signal a systemic crisis of representative democracy (Van der Meer, 2017). While the impending collapse of democracy did not come to fruition, and the declining trend in political trust in the 70's merely reflected a fluctuation in political trust levels in most countries, this sense of crisis still largely shapes the way political trust is written about in academia and society at large (Van der Meer & Zmerli, 2017).

2.2.1 Traditional cultural explanations

In the earliest decades of research, there were two competing explanations for political trust: Economic performance theory and Cultural theories. Cultural theories understand political trust as a product of a society's cultural norms and interactions and thus as something largely exogenous to the political goings-on of the day (Mishler & Rose, 2001). The underlying assumption of these theories thus is that trust emerges as a result of social relations. Individuals learn to trust or distrust from interactions with others in the culture – through experiencing how others in the culture interact with them and how others react to their initiatives and behavior. Initially, this is shaped by interactions with family, but later in life, this expands to include friends, school, work and associational life (Mishler & Rose, 2001, p. 34.). This results in a generalized level of trust among individuals often referred to as interpersonal trust. This interpersonal trust determines how likely people are to cooperate in formal and informal institutions, including cooperation in local civic associations (Putnam, Leonardi & Nanetti, 1993). In this way, interpersonal trust helps makes political institutions work, because its norms and cooperation style "spills over" into local civic organizations, which then "spills up" to national networks of institutions necessary for representative government and democracy (Putnam, Leonardi & Nanetti, 1993). Almond & Verba (2015) described a similar process - according to them, interpersonal trust is projected onto political cultures, shaping a country's civic culture. Trust interactions within a culture socialize citizens into lower or higher trust culture. Transferring positive or negative attitudes towards representative institutions and democracy from one generation to the next. A culture of trust was therefore seen as path-dependent, meaning that it would take decades or generations to develop the trust necessary for democracy and its institutions to function effectively (Mishler & Rose, 2001, p. 33). The fact that cross-national differences in trust levels were largely stable over time in Europe was seen as empirical proof of the cultural differences determining political trust (Torcal, 2017).

Cultural explanations for political trust later fell out of favor for several reasons. Firstly, the theories did not hold up to later empirical scrutiny. When cultural explanations were tested against economic performance theory, by controlling for things such as changes in GDP or household income, significance for the cultural variables faded (Campbell, 2004; Mishler & Rose, 2001). Interpersonal trust was also not found to spillover to political trust, at least in post-communist societies (Mishler & Rose, 2001)

Secondly, these articles' models and theorizing were marred by methodological problems, mainly ecological fallacies. Assuming that citizens within countries or province all largely have the same level of political trust seems archaic by today's standards (Van der Meer, 2017, p. 588). Thirdly, this conception of political culture was thought to be unable to explain the rapid fluctuations in political trust we have seen over the years since they saw political culture as something individuals are socialized into and, therefore, as a stable attitude within them (Torcal, 2017). However, a problem with this last critique is that culture, be it political or otherwise, is usually seen as an evolving constellation of attitudes, beliefs and institutions (Bell, 2013). While culture is passed down from generation to generation, it might therefore not be as static as described in older political trust literature and could still be a relevant factor. Cultures relevance is also reflected in the broader political science and sociological research of political behavior, where up until now, cultural explanations are a crucial explanation for the emergence of new cleavages (Kriesi, 2006), explaining other political behavior such as non-voting, voting for populist parties and explaining political discontent (Kemmers, Van der Waal & Aupers, 2016). One study has proposed a novel cultural mechanism for political trust formation, but this has not been extensively tested yet (Noordzij, Van der Waal & Koster, 2019).

2.2.2 Economic performance

The other explanation, economic performance theory, gained prominence in the '90s and early '00s but has also lost its importance within contemporary political trust research. The basic causal mechanism, as described in economic performance theory, explains political trust in terms of rational choice. Voters have a transactional relationship with certain institutions based on voting. They vote in elections based on expectations about the economic policies of the politician or party in office (Van der Meer, 2017).

If people think that the political institutions are performing well economically, they will trust them; if they think the political institutions are performing poorly, they will distrust them. In other words, institutions are trusted or distrusted to the extent that they produce desired economic outcomes (Mishler & Rose 2001, p. 36). Previous research has established there is some relationship between the economy and political trust, but it is no longer thought to be the primary determinant of political trust. How this mechanism plays out and which aspect of economic performance plays a decisive role is still being debated (Van der Meer, 2018). Moreover, the results vary widely even when studying the same relationships (Van der Meer, 2018). Some have argued that the varying results might be due to a decrease or variation in the attribution of responsibility of economic performance to government policy, as since globalization and economic liberalization, it is no longer self-evident that governments are responsible for macroeconomic outcomes. Nevertheless, research shows that citizens in most countries hold their government firmly accountable for macroeconomic performance (Lewis-Beck & Paldam, 2000). Additionally, while government influence on certain aspects of the economy may have diminished they are still responsible for the labor market, the housing market and tax regulations, affecting the economic situation citizens face a great deal.

2.2.3 Objective macroeconomic determinants

Objective macroeconomic outcomes do not have a clearly defined relationship with political trust as there are a wide variety of findings. Some find a clear association between macroeconomic performance and political trust (e.g., Anderson, 2009; Anderson & Singer, 2008; Bargsted, Somma & Castillo., 2017; Kalbhenn & Stracca, 2015; Rose & Mishler, 2011; Van Erkel & Van der Meer, 2016), but others do not find such evidence (e.g., Dalton, 2004; Hakhverdian & Mayne, 2012; Oskarson, 2010). The choice of independent variable does not seem to matter, as indicators such as economic development, economic growth, unemployment rates, inflation, and budget deficits all suffer from diverging outcomes (Van der Meer, 2018). The type of design or statistical model does not seem to explain the variation in findings either. However, studies that analyzed individual data without cluster correction have found stronger relationships than those that used more sophisticated multi-level models (perhaps due to type 1 errors). There are some patterns though. Cross-national studies are less likely to find a relationship between macroeconomic outcomes and political trust (Van der Meer, 2018). Cross-national studies that included corruption and more subjective evaluations in the analysis of the economy tended to find a less strong or no link between objective macro-economic outcomes and political trust. The significance fades as more contextual micro-level variables are taken into account, suggesting that we should indeed consider individual circumstances. Longitudinal studies of macro-economic performance effect on political trust do tend to find a significant relationship between economic performance and political trust (Kayser & Peress, 2012; Van Erkel & Van der Meer, 2016). These findings suggest that individuals evaluate economic performance based on previous national performance (longitudinal) and do not evaluate by comparing economic performance to other countries (cross-national), making a longitudinal design, like this study, the most suitable for testing economic evaluations.

2.2.3 Subjective macroeconomic determinants

While objective measures for macro-economic performance seem to have mixed results regarding its effect on political trust, a person's subjective evaluation of the macro-economic performance does seem to affect political trust. Decades of findings show that citizens who evaluate the performance of the national economy positively have more political trust than those who evaluate it more negatively (e.g., Chanley et al., 2000; Citrin & Green, 1986; Elinas & Lamprianou, 2014; Uslaner, 2014). This holds in both Western and Eastern Europe (Uslaner, 2014; Rose & Mishler, 2011), Latin America (Zmerli & Castillo, 2015), Southeast Asia (Park, 2017), and Africa (Hutchinsons & Johnson, 2017). Nevertheless, some argue that when looking closely, compelling evidence for a causal effect is still somewhat lacking. The papers that find the strongest links do not have multi-level models. Moreover, when measures for procedural fairness are included, effect sizes shrink or significance fades (Van der Meer, 2018).

Another approach to subjective macro-economic evaluations looks at this relationship at the aggregate level over time (Hetherington & Rudolph, 2008). These studies reveal a strong relationship between individual evaluations of macro-economic performance and political trust. Fluctuations in political trust seem to follow the trend of consumer confidence (Van der Meer, 2018.). This relationship is stronger in times when the salience of economic issues is high, making the relationship stronger in economic downturns when people are acutely aware of the economic conditions of the country and weaker during the 'good times' as fewer people have to care about it (Hetherington & Rudolph, 2008). Interestingly, the great recession did not affect political trust in the US, but it did affect political trust in Europe. Noteworthy, while political trust declined earlier in countries hit harder by the financial crisis, it did not decline deeper or longer than in countries that were less affected or did not have to accept a bailout (Van der Meer, 2018).

Van der Meer (2018) argues that it would be unwise to take the strong correlation between subjective macro-economic outcomes and political trust as compelling evidence for a causal effect. The cross-sectional design as used in these studies is likely marred by spurious effects and simultaneity. Moreover, there is little focus on moderators and individual circumstances that might affect this relationship (Van der Meer, 2018). A longitudinal design that includes individual circumstances could therefore make for interesting and needed theory testing, allowing for the observation of change in individuals over time and control for simultaneity at the same time. The longitudinal findings about salience underline this, as the findings that economics are more salient in economically uncertain times might also mean that people who are always economically insecure, like precarious workers, might base their trust or distrust more on economic factors than other citizens.

2.2.4 Trust as an evaluation

The idea that political trust was similar to personal trust, a relational concept most succinctly described as A trusts B to do X, has been theorized for a while (Hardin,1999). The idea that performance was a central determinant of political trust was theorized for even longer (Easton, 1975, p. 449). However, only in recent years, roughly since the 2010s, has empirical testing followed suit by moving from exclusively looking at economic performance to a broader conception of performance in relation to political trust (Van der Meer, 2017). Nowadays, political trust is mainly understood as an evaluation of political institutions (Hakhverdian & Mayne, 2012; Van der Meer & Zmerli, 2017). When citizens evaluate the performance of the institution positively, they trust it; when they evaluate it negatively, they withhold that trust (Hakhverdian & Mayne, 2012). This evaluative approach is an evolution of economic performance theory, recognizing that government performance is not only evaluated based on material gains. There is still no consensus on which facets of government performance are being evaluated. Cross-national differences seem to be largely explained by two factors; corruption perception and the fairness of the electoral systems; together, this is usually called procedural fairness. This is usually operationalized through two things. First, the corruption perceptions index is used as a measure of how respondents evaluate the performance of government and thus its trustworthiness. Generally speaking, if the respondent deems the government institutions corrupt, they will evaluate them negatively and distrust them. If they deem government institutions as fair, they will evaluate them positively and trust them. Interestingly enough, this relationship is moderated by education (Hakhverdian & Mayne, 2012). Hakhverdian & Mayne (2012) found that knowledge and cognitive skills affect citizens' evaluation. The effect of corruption on political trust was context-dependent as highly educated people were more trusting of their institutions in low corruption countries than their lower educated peers. While in high corruption countries the higher educated were less trusting than their lower educated peers. Because of this context-dependent nature-, this strand of theory is sometimes also known as the Macro-Micro interactive approach to political trust.

The second component that factors into procedural fairness and political trust is the electoral system, and especially the extent to which it produces representative (and thus fair) election results (Foa & Klassen, 2020). In the judgment of the fairness of the electoral system, the extent to which it produces representative elections results seems to be important in individuals’ trust evaluation. The more representative the electoral systems vote to seat conversion, the higher the average political trust. The remaining variation in political trust is thought to be explained by the evaluation of economic performance, mainly some sort of evaluation of macro-economic performance (Van der Meer, 2017)

There are a few problems with the trust as an evaluation literature that this thesis aims to address. Firstly, there is the problem of within-country variation. Procedural fairness and the evaluation of macro-economic performance work to explain cross-national variations, but they do not explain the significant variation in political trust between individuals. People in the Netherlands are exposed to the same electoral system, roughly the same levels of corruption, and a similar level of macro-economic performance. According to the theory, you would expect them to have similar levels of political trust, but in spite of that, the extent to which citizens trust government greatly varies between individuals and within individuals themselves over time (De Blok, Van der Meer & Van der Brug, 2022). While the interaction of corruption with education and subjective evaluations explain some of the individual variation, the majority of variation remains unexplained and under-theorized (Noordzij, Van der Waal & De Koster, 2019). A longitudinal analysis of how political trust of individuals is affected over time, taking into account their individual circumstance, could help shed some light on what explain differences in political trust. Secondly, there is the problem of varying results of economic explanations of political trust. Economic performance remains an important part of the assessment of political trust in the trust as an evaluation literature. However, while the theories causal mechanism hinges on individual assessment, most articles undertheorize how citizens actually think about economic performance. For example, would an individual that cannot afford a house, has trouble finding a stable job and or has a college debt to pay off still evaluate governments economic performance positively if the country's GDP is growing? A longitudinal analysis of how an individual's economic circumstances affect an individual over time would help shed light on this and add to the literature on political trust.

2.3 Theories & hypotheses

2.3.1 Economic insecurity & political trust

There is a potential disparity between how government and media discuss economic performance and what individuals feel or know about their own economic status. A country's economic performance might be good on paper - GDP is growing year after year and core inflation is only 2%, but if a large group of citizens feel that their own cost of living is going up faster than their income, they will likely perceive economic performance differently than how it is being reported (Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi, 2009, pp 8-10). There may be simple explanations for these disparities – the benefits of an increase in GDP might be going to a small subset of the population - while most individuals in society are actually worse off than before. If the measurement system, which is supposed to give a broad account of the situation, is incongruent with individuals' own experiences and perceptions, this might add to the distrust of those institutions (Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi, 2009). The way in which political trust research generally looks at economic performance and its relationship with economic indicators –focusing on macro-economic performance and a subjective evaluation of that performance - does not reflect the broader way citizens tend to look at their economic circumstances. If political trust is an evaluation, we might be better able to explain variation in political trust by taking a more all-encompassing approach to the economy. Precarious work theory has a broader conception of the economy in relation to individuals' welfare, on which this thesis will build to provide a more comprehensive look at the relationship between the economy and political trust.

Kalleberg (2009) argues that in recent decades, the economic realities individual citizens face in established economies have fundamentally shifted. Traditionally, the economic conflicts that defined politics in industrialized countries were shaped by the conflict between workers versus business owners, or in other words, the class cleavage, but in modern post-industrial democracies, this is no longer as straightforward. Kalleberg argues that due to globalization, the proliferation of information technology, and an expanding (global) workforce, labor market dynamics have shifted to favor employers (Kalleberg, 2009). Parallel to these developments, governments have curtailed social security programs and adopted labor legislation, allowing for a flexibilization of labor market regulation (Jansen & Lehr, 2022). While workers with standard employment relations - those with secure and permanent contracts - are still in the majority, their numbers are declining and the number of employees in insecure non-standard employment relations has increased steadily (Smits, De Vries & Gringhuis, 2021). Workers in non-standard employment relations - such as those with temporary contracts, in part-time employment, 0-hour contracts, agency workers or the solo self-employed - lack the economic security traditionally associated with employment. This new economic reality has shifted some of the economic risks from institutions, such as government and employers, to individuals and has created a growing number of what Kalleberg (2009) calls "precarious" workers. Precarious workers lack the economic security and material welfare that traditionally have been associated with being employed (Kalleberg & Vallas, 2018). Nowadays, employees are a heterogenous group in which employees are precarious to a degree based on the economic insecurity they are personally facing. Those with standard employment are the least precarious, and those in non-standard employment relations are more precarious. Precarious workers are precarious to a degree, because while people with a part-time contract or successful freelancers are technically more insecure than someone with a full-time contract, their work is still relatively stable. Precarious workers often face uncertain or unpredictable work or have little control over working hours and conditions (Kalleberg, 2009). Think of an Uber driver, parcel delivery, work in a call center or manufacturing. Some argue that people in these arrangements have individual agency. While that might be true for solo-self-employed knowledge workers, this usually does not go for lower-skilled work, such as a truck driver working in a false self-employed construction. Precariousness thus is not only about working in a non-standard employment relationship but also about skill.

Precarious workers often struggle to make ends meet resulting in a problematic level of vulnerability due to their unstable work environment, low and variable income, and the knowledge of being exceedingly replaceable. This uncertainty of precarious workers despite having paid work affects both their financial welfare and general wellbeing (Kalleberg & Vallas, 2018). Politicians have so far not managed to address the issues, leading to the growing "precariat". Precarious workers and those with secure employment have different and incompatible political interests regarding labor market policies. Those in secure employment enjoy protected jobs with better social security arrangements. They benefit from precarious workers being easily let go or replaced, meaning they do not have to bear the downturn in the business cycle (Rueda, 2005). The reverse is true for those in insecure employment, precarious workers would benefit from less rigid employment protections for those in standard employment so that they could join their ranks more easily (Rueda, 2005). Due to these diametrically different interests, it is hard to represent both groups at the same time. Moreover, politicians have added to the driving forces behind precarious work through deregulation, economic liberalization and marketization of state services. As precarious workers are more diverse and less numerous than those in standard employment, it is less attractive to parties to represent precarious workers (Kalleberg & Vallas, 2018). These factors might explain why a successful political response is so far absent, even in parties most likely to represent them based on ideological grounds.

While parties are not responding to the growing economic insecurity, Kalleberg and Vallas argue that precariousness is likely a driving force for the political behavior of citizens. More specifically, they argue precariousness and the insecurity that comes with it is leading to an increased support for populist parties, politicians, and protest movements like the gilets jaune in France, and the occupy movement that we have seen across western democracies (Kalleberg & Vallas, 2018). The few case studies that examine the effect of precariousness on political behavior support their arguments - showing that precariousness affects both voting behavior and increases the likelihood of engaging in non-electoral political behavior such as protests (Marx & Picot, 2013; Monticelli & Bassoli, 2019). The Netherlands has embraced the model of “flexicurity” in labor market regulations, making precarious work prevalent when compared to other European countries (Jansen & Lehr, 2022).

My expectation is that when citizens are evaluating institutional economic performance, their individual circumstances like their type of employment, their housing situation or if their income is sufficient to live on also play a part in that evaluation. Potentially they play a bigger role than macro-economic performance or their net income. Because when someone thinks about how their economic situation has changed, questions like is my job secure, can I pay rent or qualify for a mortgage, can I pay of my (student) debt, or will I be forced to live pay check to pay check, seem more relevant than the percentage of GDP growth (Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi, 2009). My previous work showed that precarious workers, especially those with insufficient income and insecure jobs, have significantly lower political trust when compared to less precarious workers (Van Gorp, 2020). This thesis will build and expand on this by utilizing a longitudinal design, examining how the precariousness of an individual affects political trust over time. Where my previous work examined employees at a specific point in time, this thesis has a broader scope by not just looking at the working population but including the degree of precariousness of the general population and how it changes over time. Precariousness is a multidimensional and broad concept; therefore, this thesis will include equally broad measures indicating employment status or daily occupation, sufficiency of income, the skill level of their profession and an individual's housing situation. I expect that the more precarious someone is, the more negatively they will evaluate the objects of political trust due to the lack of government response to their economic situation. If individuals grow more precarious over time, I expect them to evaluate political trust objects more negatively as they grow more precarious. On the other side of the spectrum, some individuals will be in the exact reverse situation over the time frame of this study. My expectation is that people who transition from a situation of precarity to a more secure economic situation will grow more trusting over time, as the political and institutional economic response better serves their interests. I therefore formulate the following hypotheses:

H1: If an individual's precariousness changes due to a change in the (a) sufficiency of their income, (b) occupation, (c) the skill level of their profession or (d) their housing situation, I expect political trust to change negatively or positively accordingly.

While I conceptualize precariousness as a broader concept, not only applicable to the working population, some concepts related to precariousness only apply to those in the working population, such as skill or perceived job security. I therefore formulate the following hypothesis about political trust in the working population.

H2: If an individual's precariousness changes due to a change in the (a) sufficiency of their income, (b) their job security, (c) their employment status, (d) the skill level of their profession or (e) their housing situation I expect political trust to change negatively or positively accordingly.

2.3.2 Culture, status-based conflicts & political trust

In this section of the thesis, I will first make an argument for including a cultural perspective on political trust, after which I will discuss political trust in relation to a status-based cultural conflict, after which I formulate a testable hypothesis based on cultural capital.

Something that is missing from the trust as an evaluation literature is that whether you view objects of political trust as fair or corrupt might increasingly be influenced by the political party you vote for, instead of an actual assessment of past interactions. The narrative of the good people versus the corrupt elite is striking a chord as evident by populist electoral success (Noordzij, Van der Waal & Koster, 2019). This thesis hopes to better explain differences between individuals' political trust by taking the individuals economic and cultural positions into account.

In the political trust literature, cultural explanations have fell out of favor, but in other strands of research, socio-cultural explanations of political discontent and electoral behavior are widely accepted or even increasingly important. For Example, Kriesi et al. (2006) argue that we can see the emergence of a new cleavage in western democracies, driving voting behavior. Cleavages are lasting conflicts that start as a divide that splits society into different groups with different interests. These structural divides eventually get associated with sets of values, identities and voting behavior. Both political parties and voters position themselves on one side of the conflict, or if there is no political response, new parties emerge to represent the interest of that side (Kriesi et al., 2006). Kriesi et al. (2006) argue that there is a new cleavage in western democracies between the winners and losers of globalization. Globalization, they argue, has led to both increased economic competition and increased cultural competition due to migration and changing values (Kriesi et al., 2006, p. 922). The cultural dimension of this cleavage features one side that wants to defend tradition, has an increasing nationalist and ethnic character, and is against the process of European integration and in favor of a restrictive immigration policy (Kriesi et al., 2006, p. 925). On the other side of the conflict, there are those with cultural liberal values who are more open to cultural differences and in favor of European integration. Their analysis showed that the cultural dimension of this cleavage had become the primary basis for voting decisions (Kriesi et al., 2006, p. 950).

Norris & Inglehart (2019) argue that the rise of populism and populist-authoritarianism is due to a cultural backlash against social liberal values. As western post-industrial societies had unprecedented levels of existential security, young people developed different values than previous generations. Materialist values emphasizing economic and physical security above all and gave way to post-materialist values prioritizing individual free choice and self-expression (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, p. 32). Greater emphasis on issues such as environmental protection, the democratization of institutions, cosmopolitanism and respect for human rights. These socially liberal values stand in stark contrast to traditional socially-conservative values of previous generations. The rapid shift away from their moral beliefs in an increasingly diverse society threatens social conservatism, making them grow either disillusioned with politics or embrace more authoritarian values and vote for more radical and populist political candidates who appeal to their values (Norris & Inglehart, 2019, pp. 30-50).

Kemmer, Van der Waal & Aupers (2016) observed similar dynamics in interviews with politically discontented citizens in the Netherlands. They interviewed citizens who were fed up with the Dutch (political) establishment and turned instead to populist parties or stopped voting altogether about the reasoning and motives of their political behavior. Not recognizing themselves in the establishment values and perspectives, some experience existential unease. Those discontented citizens either consciously disengage after concluding that no person or institution can be trusted or grow supportive of anti-establishment politicians. Another study in the Netherlands showed that voters who voted for new-right parties are generally less educated voters with an authoritarian agenda, who frame their politics in opposition to culturally progressive ideas. The strongest driver for new right voting propensity were ethnocentric views in opposition to the establishment's political correctness and multiculturalism (De Koster, Achteberg & Van der Waal, 2014).

The political trust literature conceptualizes political trust as an evaluation that is to be understood on the micro-level through citizens' perceptions of the political system and its actors (Van der Meer, 2010, p. 532). As described above, other political science literature convincingly shows that political attitudes and discontent are driven by cultural values. Therefore, one would expect that socio-cultural explanations likely also play a role in citizens' evaluations of trustworthiness. Considering this, an analysis of what determines political trust in individuals should include cultural theories. One study proposes such a cultural explanation for political trust in individuals. The authors argue that the effects of education on trust in politicians are not due to differences in education level itself, but at its core is about a status-based cultural conflict (Noordzij, Van der Waal & De Koster, 2019).

Studies consistently show that higher educated citizens have more political trust than lower educated citizens, at least in western countries like the Netherlands (Armingeon & Guthman 2014; Van der Meer 2010, Hakhverdian& Mayne, 2012). Noordzij, Van der Waal & De Koster (2019) argue that this is not solely due to education, but instead that education is an indicator of individuals' cultural status. The effect of education on political trust is usually explained by one of two explanations in the literature. The first is a material explanation - as people with higher education are more likely to have higher paying jobs, in line with economic performance theory, they have more political trust. This explanation is unsatisfying as education's effect on political trust stays consistently strong in studies that examine the relationship between economic evaluations and political trust (Noordzij, Van der Waal & De Koster, 2019). The second is an informational approach - which proposes that people with higher education are better equipped to interpret politics' complex and abstract course. If the less educated do not approve of the actions of politicians or political outcomes, they are more likely to attribute it to ill-will or distrustful persons. Hakhverdian and Mayne (2012) showed that higher educated citizens more accurately assess the procedural fairness in their respective countries, being more trusting in low corruption environments than lower educated citizens and having less political trust in high corruption countries. However, the educational approach can only partially account for the educational effect on political trust (Armingeon and Guthman, 2014). Instead, Noordzij, Van Der Waal & De Koster (2019) theorize and find evidence supporting the claim that education has acted as a status indicator but that the actual underlying mechanism is a status-based cultural conflict. In this cultural conflict, on the one side, you have higher educated people that are part of the elite culture and distinguish themselves from lower status individuals through their language, values and other cultural signals from the lower educated individuals on the other side of the conflict. Because lower educated citizens do not share this affinity with elite culture, hold different views and attitudes, and display different behavior than those socialized in elite culture, they feel symbolically excluded or looked down upon. Establishment politicians are part of the elite culture and exhibit high-status signals, which incites opposition among low-status groups. These groups feel that their lifestyle and attitudes are looked down upon or that their lifestyle is portrayed as inferior in political discourse. The lower trust among lower educated citizens reflects their opposition to the status signaling of politicians that, for the most part, are high-status individuals or reflect this elite culture (Noordzij, Van der Waal & De Koster, 2019).

Key to their theory about the status-based cultural conflict and political trust is the concept of cultural capital, which they built on Lamont & Laurea (1988) and Bourdieu & Passeron (1979). The concept of cultural capital was first introduced by Bourdieu & Passeron (1979), who asked themselves why social mobility in France was relatively stagnant despite government interventions shrinking the wealth and education gaps in French society. They expected social mobility would increase across the lower classes. Instead of using material resources to reproduce or reinforce their position in society, the upper class used cultural resources to distinguish themselves from other groups in society, maintaining their social positions through cultural instead of material means. In Bourdieu's & Passerson's early work, cultural capital was mainly used to examine how the educational system contributed to the reproduction of power relationships in society (Lamont & Lareau, 1988). Bourdieu and Passerson theorized that schools are not socially neutral institutions but reflect the experiences and expectations of the "dominant class". Children who grow up in the dominant class enter school with crucial social and cultural cues already in their repertoire, making school easier. In contrast, working and lower-class students must acquire the knowledge and skills to navigate their school experience. While children from other classes can acquire cultural competencies that characterize the upper and upper-middle class, they can never achieve the natural familiarity of those growing up in these classes and are academically penalized, stunting their social mobility.

In their later books, they shift cultural capital's meaning from an informal academic standard to linguistic aptitude and familiarity with culture and diplomas and back. In “distinction,” Bourdieu (1984) expanded on this concept, and cultural capital plays a different theoretical role: the elite distinguished themselves from other classes through their cultural attitudes, preferences and behaviors that he conceptualized as tastes. These tastes are then used for social selection, from the way someone speaks, dresses, to what music someone listens to. These mannerisms vary with cultural and economic capital and are used to signal to others that you belong to a particular group of society and to distinguish yourself from others that do not belong in certain groups, places and positions (Lamont & Laureau, 1988).

According to Lamont and Lareau (1988), across Bourdieu's global theoretical framework, cultural capital is alternatively an informal academic standard, a class attribute, a mechanism for social selections and a resource for power used as an indicator and or basis for class positions. While it adds to Bourdieu's framework, it makes systematic comparisons and assessment of the work difficult. They propose simplifying cultural capital to make it more applicable in comparative social sciences. As Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital as a basis for exclusion from jobs, resources and high-status groups is the most important and original dimension of Bourdieu and Passeron's theory, they propose to define Cultural capital as an individual's familiarity with a widely shared, legitimate culture made up of high-status cultural signals – signals referring to attitudes, preferences, behaviors and goods- used in direct or indirect social and cultural exclusions. Or in other words, people with high cultural capital have an affinity with elite culture. Signaling your affinity with elite culture is used to gain or maintain the high-status position of groups with high cultural capital and to exclude those with lower cultural capital (Lamont & Lareau, 1988).

Establishment politicians tend to have high cultural capital and display elite cultural signals. However, as what is part of elite culture is context specific, we need to establish what attitudes and preferences are part of the legitimate culture in the Netherlands before discussing its political implications. In the literature, the Netherlands is often grouped within north-western European countries in which two sets of preferences, in particular, are intertwined with notions of superiority and inferiority in political superiority signaling. The first is the contrast between high-brow cultural consumption, which is perceived as superior to low-brow cultural consumption (Noordzij, De Koster & Van der Waal, 2019). High-brow cultural consumption is the consumption of art associated with an elite taste, for example classical music, reading literary fiction and art house film. Low brow cultural consumption is the consumption of media with a broader appeal and a more simplistic or inferior reputation, such as blockbuster cinema, pop music or tabloid magazines. Traditionally high-brow cultural consumption is the best indicator of high cultural capital, but in continental Europe, this seems to slowly be shifting in the younger generations (Prieur & Savage, 2013).

The second preference associated with political superiority signaling is having or exhibiting cosmopolitan values or what is sometimes known as cultural liberalism. People with cosmopolitan values tend to be more open and reflective regarding cultural differences. Those with higher cultural capital now distinguish themselves by being more internationally oriented in both their cultural consumption and political values, which is considered high status versus culturally conservative and (Prieur & Savage, 2013; Noordzij, Van der Waal & De Koster, 2019). People with lower cultural capital tend to have more culturally protectionist political values and thus reject globalization. Moreover, they are more locally and nationally oriented in their cultural consumption and political values (Prieur & Savage, 2013; Kriesi et al., 2006).

The unequal distribution of cultural capital is not only exclusionary when it comes to societal status but also has political ramifications (Noordzij, Van der Waal & De Koster, 2019.). Those with limited cultural capital will vote for parties that signal similar values even if it goes against their economic interests (Achterberg & Houtman, 2006). This is also echoed in the emergence of the new integration demarcation cleavage(Kriesi et al. 2006). Noordzij, van der Waal & de Koster (2019) describe how the cultural conflict between those with high levels of cultural capital and those with low cultural capital affects the political trust evaluation. They hypothesized that the political trust gap associated with education, in reality, reflects the frustration of people with lower cultural status with people with a higher status who denote their attitudes and preferences as vulgar and inappropriate. Establishment politicians tend to be part of this high-status group and, to the frustration of those with lower cultural status, are prone to disqualify or wag their finger at lower-status individuals' preferences and attitudes, like attitudes on immigration and EU integration.

Establishment politicians signal superiority via high-brow taste and culturalism and the disqualification of low-brow taste and cultural conservatism of the average less educated citizens. This seems to factor in the political trust evaluation of citizens in several ways. The higher status signals of establishment politicians make the higher educated feel recognition and superiority, which, in turn, leads to political trust of citizens that poses similar preferences and attitudes. Those same signals make citizens with lower political capital feel symbolically excluded or looked down upon, leading to lower political trust. Politicians on the lower-status side of this cultural conflict also signal their position on the supply side, with discourse that is often accompanied by firm accusations of cultural elitism and accusations of an out-of-touch elite, further fanning the conflict (Noordzij, Van der Waal & Koster, 2019). People can acquire more cultural capital throughout life as they develop more affinity with the dominant culture through attending education, developing more elite tastes or shifting values. I expect that as people acquire more cultural capital, their political trust will also increase as they feel more represented by politicians and political institutions. My expectation is that the reverse can also be true, as people grow increasingly dissatisfied with the establishment, a backlash reaction to societies changing values or the superiority signaling of the establishment. I expect that if people have increasingly less affinity with elite culture, their political trust will also diminish. Based on this, I formulate the following hypothesis:

H 3: As people acquire more cultural capital over time, their political trust will also increase.

3 Data and methods

In this chapter, I will discuss the research approach, data selection and research method. In this thesis, I conduct a longitudinal analysis to test whether individual circumstances, specifically a person's economic and cultural position within society, affected political trust within the Netherlands between 2007 – 2018 using waves 1 to 11 of the LISS panel data. First, I will discuss the data used, its origin, and its structure. Second, I discuss the operationalization of the dependent variable, political trust. In turn, the independent variables, precariousness & cultural capital are discussed. I will do this by doing a fixed effects analysis using panel data to model the movement of political trust over time within individuals.

3.1 Research approach: Large-N quantitative analysis

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This thesis aims to examine what explains differences in individuals' political trust by examining what explains changes in political trust over time in individuals. This research aim fits a large-N quantitative research approach over a qualitative examination of a small number of cases, as it aims to test whether a hypothesized relationship is there in the population, which is best done using a large number of observations, comparing them using statistical methods (Gerring, 2007). The quantitative research approach has several advantages in answering this research question, namely the large number of observations available to test theories, the generalizability of the findings, and the ability to control for potential confounders (Gerring, 2007). However, this research approach also has some downsides, namely that it only examines observations in a few key aspects and that it is hard to establish true causal inference using the robust dependence approach (Goldthorpe, 2001).

Large-N studies are better equipped to compare a large number of cases in comparison to qualitative methods. Qualitative methods examine a small number of cases comprehensively and are therefore great at establishing or describing how X exactly led to Y in those specific cases, but it is impossible to examine thousands of cases in such detail (Gering, 2007). In political trust research, we already have an established theoretical idea of how the mechanism plays out in individuals - namely as an evaluation – and it is therefore more relevant to utilize the large amount of information quantitative research methods offers to compare large groups of individuals at different points in time.

I am interested in the effects of X – in this study precariousness and cultural capital - on the Y being political trust for a sample of individuals in the Netherlands. As we do not have data on each citizen living in the Dutch population so a sample is drawn from the general population. The larger the number of observations, the more information the study works with and the likelier it is that the observed relationship found in the data is also present in the general population. Or in other words, these types of studies have high external validity when compared to qualitative work. This generalizability is another advantage of large N quantitative research (Gerring, 2007).

An additional advantage of quantitative methods is that it allows you to control for confounding variables and other quality control checks such as a reliability analysis, giving you a better idea if you measure what you want to measure. Confounders are variables that have a potential cause and effect relationship with both the X and the Y variables. For example, by leaving out cultural capital in my previous work, the effect of cultural status might have inaccurately been attributed to education, while in reality, there is no significant relationship between education and political trust. If the confounder is controlled for the variance in political trust as a result of cultural capital gets accurately attributed to it, ensuring that I do not overestimate the relationship of education. Panel data analysis using fixed-effects models allows for exceptionally good quality control as you measure one or more variables on one or more persons repeatedly (Hsiao, 2007) and control of confounding variables, as the repeated measurement of the same case ensure that measurement errors for individuals standout. Moreover, due to the nature of the fixed effects estimation, you control for unobserved heterogeneity at the individual level, meaning that you control for all the potential confounders tied to an individual's characteristics that are time-invariant or are not present in the data. For example, intelligence or personality characteristics might affect an individual's political trust but are not accounted for in the dataset (Wooldridge, 2016).

Large N studies also have some downsides; Qualitative methods examination of one or more cases in great detail are better at producing a detailed picture of how a causal mechanism actually plays out, than comparing cases on a few key characteristics using statistical methods, or in other words, they have a higher internal validity (Gerring, 2007). This also brings me to the second downside of this research approach, causality as robust dependence. As this thesis relies on survey data and is not set up like an experiment, we establish causation by examining statistically significant associations. Therefore, studies such as this do not actually observe the causal mechanism but only show relations among variables. The idea behind causality as robust dependence is that if we control for other factors in our models and the effect remains robust, we are reasonably confident that there is indeed causality. Correlation alone does not prove causality, but if there is causation, there must be some association. The downside to this is that strictly speaking this is no true test of causality, as untested confounders are always a possibility (Goldthorpe, 2001). Still using a sufficient theoretical basis and with a clear idea of how the mechanism plays out in individuals, a large N study is the closest we can come to causal inference in large populations in settings that do not allow for experiments.

3.2 Dataset

For this study, I have combined data from the first 11 waves of the Longitudinal Studies for the Social Sciences Panel (LISS panel). The LISS panel consists of several core studies that are conducted over the span of each year and has been in operation since October 2007 (CentERdata, 2022a). CentERdata has produced 14 waves of the LISS panel data, but some of the key variables are not included in the last 3 waves; therefore, only the first 11 waves are used. Another consideration to include only the first 11 waves is the distorting effect the covid-19 pandemic has had on political trust, through the rally around the flag effect and the subsequent crash, potentially affecting the results of the analysis in unforeseen ways (CentERdata, 2022b). Additionally, I have supplemented the dataset with data that is not included in the LISS study in order to be able to control for corruption perceptions, using data from transparency international and gross domestic product (GDP) using data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) of the Netherlands.

3.2.1 LISS panel data

This thesis uses data from the Longitudinal Studies for the Social Sciences Panel (LISS panel). The LISS panel (CentERdata, 2022a) conducted by centERdata (Tilburg University, the Netherlands), is a representative sample of Dutch individuals. The panel is based on a true probability sample of 5000 households, comprising 7500 individuals, drawn from the Dutch population register, ensuring its representativeness. The participants are paid to participate in monthly online questionaries' of about 15 to 30 minutes (CentERdata, 2022a). Those without internet or a computer are provided these resources making sure there are no selection effects due to the survey method (Scherpenzeel, 2009). About 80% of the eligible persons living in the registered panel households participate in the panel. The monthly response rate varies between about 50 and 80%, depending on the questionnaire and month. The average individual response rate to at least one survey per month hovers around 80.4% a month. The LISS panel sample is continuously compared with Central Bureau of Statistics data on the population of the Netherlands. While initially, people of non-Dutch origins were underrepresented, this has improved over the years, and representativeness has improved in general (CentERdata, 2022c)

The respondent attrition is about 12% per year, and the household attrition is about 10% per year. LISS has checked whether certain groups are more likely to drop out than others and whether this leads to bias. Those below the age of 25 have the lowest level of attrition and the oldest (age 75+) the highest with 10%. Households that include disabled persons have an attrition that is clearly below the average at 3.4%. Households whose internet or pic is provided by LISS also have a significantly lower attrition rate (2,5%). There are no significant differences by other characteristics such as gender, household size, type of tenure, highest education level, self-employed, unemployed, urbanization and household type, ensuring a sample that is unusually representative of the population (De Vos, 2009).

For this thesis, I have merged the following core studies from waves 1 to 11: LISS panel Background variables, politics and values, social integration and leisure, work & schooling, economics: income and economics: housing. The core studies are collected at one-year intervals, with each core study being collected in a different month, while the background variables are collected each month. The data for wave 1 therefore spans from late 2007 to late 2008. For example wave 1 of the politics and value study is collected between 3-12-2007 and 25-03-2008, the economic core studies in wave 1 are collected between 02-06-2008-30-09-2008 and the work and schooling core study of wave 1 is collected between 07-04-2008 and 30-07-2008. This pattern is repeated over the 11 waves used in this thesis (CentERdata, 2022b). Technically speaking wave 1 therefore starts in late 2007, but as the vast majority of studies throughout 2008, I will refer to wave 1 as 2008, wave 2 as 2009 and so on. The background variables for wave 1 to 11 used in this dataset are the ones collected concurrently with the politics and values core study that contains the dependent variables. Resulting in a dataset in which individuals are nested in households that are in turn nested in years. Households contain between 1 to 11 members, but the vast majority of households (84.3%) contain less than 5 members. The household level of data therefore does not contain enough information to include households as a separate level in the multilevel model without potentially biasing estimates.

There are two possible solutions to this problem, either include only one randomly selected household member in the analysis and leave out the other individuals and observation or compute cluster robust standard errors, which yield robust results despite clustering in the data. Following Angrist & Pischke (2008, pp. 232-235). I opted for cluster robust standard errors for two reasons. Firstly, opting for cluster robust standard errors allowed me to retain more observations improving the statistical power and generalizability of my results over the approach where I included only one household member. Secondly, given that this study includes several variables related to economics, such as sufficiency of income and net income heteroskedasticity is likely present as for example income differs more between individuals later in life as their careers run their course. I would therefore likely need to estimate my models with heteroskedastic robust standard errors making the efficiency of non-robust standard errors not an argument in favor of retaining only one household member. Furthermore, cluster robust standard errors are also heteroskedastic consistent.

Some aspects of precariousness are strictly related to the nature of the employment relation, such as perceived job security or profession. While these factors are theoretically interesting in answering the research question, the hypothesized relationships in chapter 2 do not only pertain to the working population of the Netherlands but the population as a whole. Therefore part of the analysis will be conducted using only the working population of the sample.

3.2.2 Central Bureau of statistics

Data on GDP change in both numbers and percentages were retrieved via stat line a platform by the Central Bureau of statistics (CBS, 2022b). The CBS is an independent government agency that provides data on Dutch society mainly pertaining to demographics, social themes and the Dutch economy (CBS, 2022a).

3.2.3 Transparency International

In order to be able to control for corruption the data was also supplemented with data by transparency international on the corruption perceptions index (CPI) data from the Netherlands for each year were used in this study. (Transparency International, 2022) . Corruption perception quantifies the perceived level of public-sector corruption. The CPI is a combined measure, consisting of 13 items from 11 independent institutions, that describes the perceptions of corruption among country experts and business leaders and are widely used in 3.3 Operationalization of the dependent variable: political trust.

As established in the theoretical framework political trust represents the evaluations and orientations to specific institutions and actors with which citizens have a trust relationship such as the legislature, the executive, political parties as well as public sector agencies such as the police and civil services (Norris, 2017). The politics and value study of the LISS panel includes items of “satisfaction with” and “confidence in” for all the mentioned institutions in each of the 11 waves used in this thesis. However, when looking at the dutch language version of the codebook - the language the questionnaire was administered in - the actual word used in the confidence item is “vertrouwen” which is most commonly translated as “trust”. The confidence items therefor seem the most suitable for the research in this thesis. The politics and value questionnaire asks respondents *“using a scale from 0 (no confidence at all) to 10 (full confidence), to what extent do you personally trust the following institutions?”.* Assigning respondents, a score of 0 to 10 on an 11-point scale based on their answers, -9 if they did not answer the question and a score of 999 if they answered the question with “I don’t know”. The institutions included range from the dutch government, the dutch legislature, political parties, politicians, the European parliament, the United Nations and the media (CS*013 - CS*027). In order to operationalize political trust variable, I wanted to construct a political trust scale.

There are several approaches when constructing a scale out of several variables to operationalize a concept. One can include certain items for substantive theoretical reasons after which a reliability analysis of the created scale suffices or using factor analysis use statistical methods to discover whether a selection of items covary, effectively measuring if the latent variable you are interested in exists in the data and which items should be used to construct the scale. The fact that the data in this study has a panel structure poses an additional challenge as the factor loadings might be slightly different each year, leaving a few options, run an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) each year, run an EFA on the whole data set and ignore its panel structure, or perform an EFA on one or more years to get a view of the data and then use the solution and check for its reliability in each wave (Field, 2018). Going over the literature on political trust as the evaluation of process and performance, I concluded that people tend to use a reliability analysis only (Hakhverdian & Mayne, 2012; Van der Meer & Hakhverdian, 2017). My compromise is therefore to conduct an EFA in wave 1. As the substantive focus of this study is on domestic institutions and their respective evaluation, I chose to exclude the items pertaining to international organizations, such as the EU institutions and the UN, from the analysis, as well as media and science as they are not state institutions as mentioned by Norris (2017). I excluded confidence in democracy as that refers to defuse support. A principal axis factor analysis was conducted on the seven items referring to state institutions. The Kaiser Meyers Olkin (KMO) measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis. The overall KMO was 0.797, and all separate measures were greater than 0.60, which is above the acceptable limit of 0.5. Three factors were found, but only one had an eigenvalue above kaisers criterion of 1, and that factor explained 98% of the variance (Field, 2018). Therefore, I retained one factor; the solution can be found in Appendix A. It shows the factor loadings after rotation.

The EFA solutions showed there is sufficient ground to construct a scaled variable from the four items but were not used to construct the scale (Field, 2018, p. 779 -827.). After the EFA, I used the row mean method to construct the scaled variable from confidence in government (CS*013), confidence in parliament (CS*014), confidence in politicians (CS*017) and confidence in political parties (CS*018) separately in each wave before merging, and do a reliability analysis in each wave the results of which have been presented in appendix B. All Cronbach's α are well above the conventional cut of point, and even a bit high as they are all above 0.90, suggesting there is some redundancy (Tavakol & Dennick, R. 2011). After consideration and examining the political trust literature all four items were kept based on theoretical grounds and conventions in the literature (Hakhverdian & Mayne, 2012; Van der Meer & Hakhverdian, 2017). After dropping the respondents with missing's on the relevant variables and those that answered "I don't know" political trust has 61,994 observations, with a mean score of 5.10 across all the individuals in all 11 included waves.

3.4 Operationalization of the independent variable

3.4.1 Independent variables: Precariousness

3.4.1.1 Sufficiency of income

In contrast to more traditional economic approaches to economic welfare, precarious work theory is not so much interested in the hard numbers of income but rather in whether the income is sufficient to live on as precarious workers struggle to make ends meet due to their environment or structural economic forces. The LISS core study economic: income has a few options available to operationalize the sufficiency of income. For example, variable Ci0*a243 "can you indicate on a scale from 0 to 10 if your financial significantly worsened (0) or strongly improved (10). Note that a star is used as in each wave, the wave number is part of that variable name. The question that asks the most directly about sufficiency of income is Ci0*a244 "can *you indicate, on a scale from 0 to 10, if your personal income is really hard to live off (0), or very easy to live off (10)*". From wave 12 onwards, Ci0*244 is replaced by the question whether your household's income is sufficient to live on (CI*347). While the effect of household income might actually be a better measure, seeing as your own income's sufficiency might be mediated if your partners income is high, these questions measure a substantively different thing. Therefore, I decided to only include the LISS panel waves 1 too 11 that included item Ci0*244.

3.4.1.2 Job security

Job security or a lack thereof is an important factor in whether you are financially secure or not. The knowledge of being easily replaced or your job being terminated because of automation is considered an important factor in the problematic degree of insecurity precarious workers live with (Kalleberg, 2009). In the Income – LISS core study, adult respondents that have indicated that they worked (captured in ci*004) are asked (ci*256) *"Do you think there is any chance that you will lose your job in the coming 12 months? You can indicate this in terms of a percentage."* In wave 1 to 9 the answers range from 0% to 100% and from wave 10 onwards, a separate answer category is included for respondents for whom the questions are irrelevant "I will voluntarily be quitting my job in the coming 12 months", those respondents get assigned a score of 998. Respondents with the value 998 will be treated as missing's. The job security variable will only be included in the analysis of the working sample as it is only relevant for those respondents with a job.

3.4.1.3 Occupation

An important factor in theories about precariousness is their primary occupation and the nature of the employment relationship and the contract type that defines it if they have a job. Successful business owners and standard employed full-time workers are the most secure, and 0 hour contract workers, temporary employees and agency workers being more precarious (Jansen & Lehr, 2022). As this thesis operationalizes occupation in the general population and not just worker, a broader range of primary occupations such as being a homemaker, being retired, a volunteer or a student will also be taken into account. The LISS panel offers two avenues to operationalize this. In the background study respondents get asked their "most important occupation". The work and schooling core study asks almost exactly the same question, but instead each answer category of the primary occupation gets its own variable. Respondents are asked "*In cw*88 through cw*102 please indicate which of the following statements* *apply to your situation. Try to be as thorough as you can. Checkmark at least one square*" "Cw*088: I perform paid work (even if it is just one or several hours per wek or for a brief period)" "Cw*89 I am not working now, but have performed paid work in the past" "cw*90 I perform unpaid work while retaining my benefit or allowance" "cw*91 I am looking for work following the loss of my previous job" "cw*92 I have performed paid work, but am released from the obligation to find a new job following the loss of my previous job" "cw*93 I am a first-time job seeker" "cw*94 I am a first-time job seeker" "cw*95 I am a pupil / student / trainee with an expenses claim only" "cw*96 I take care of the household" "cw*97 I live off private means " cw*98 I have taken early retirement" "cw*99 I am a pensioner" "cw*100 I am partly or wholly disabled for work" "cw*101 I perform voluntary work" "cw*102 I perform paid work, but am looking for more or other work". Because the occupation question in the work and schooling core study has follow-up options asked concurrently, I chose the variables cw*88 too cw*102.

Using the information of the variables mentioned above I generated a primary occupation variable in each subsequent wave included in the study. In which based on the above answer, respondents were coded in the following categories: "partly or wholly disabled" were given a score of 1. "Unemployed (but looking for a job)" were assigned to category 2. "Solo-self-employed & freelancers" were assigned a score of 3. Those with an occupation that was not related to working, such as taking care of households, students and the two retirement categories (cw*89, cw*90, cw*92, cw*95-99 and cw*101) were assigned to category 9 "not working". Category 9 consists of all respondents that are not working but are not looking for a job and thus not unemployed.

Respondents who gave several answers (22059 observations over 11 waves) to the previous questions were asked in cw*104 *"You gave several answers to the previous question. Please indicate here which of these answers best describes your situation?"* with 15 answer categories corresponding to variables cw*088 cw-120. The answers on 104 were then used to recode the primary occupation assignment to contain only the most important occupation for those respondents who answered yes on multiple occupations.

Respondents who indicated that they worked in cw*088 to cw*102 where then asked for more details on their contracts. Cw*121 asks if they are an employee in permanent (1), temporary employment (2), an on-call employee (3), a temp staffer (4), a solo self-employed/freelancer (6) an independent professional. (7) directors of a limited liability or private limited company, (8) majority shareholder director. Those in temporary contracts were assigned a score of 5 in the occupation variable.

Cw*126 respondents who answered that they worked but are not entrepreneurs were asked "*How many hours per week are you employed, according to your employment contract? If you have multiple jobs that are equal in terms of hours, please consider the job most important to you.".* The answers were allowed to range between 0 and 100. Cw*127 asked how many hours they actually worked, but as contract type is the variable this thesis is most interested in, this was used to determine whether those who answered they are an employee in a permanent contract (score of 1 in cw*121) work part-time (12 - 35 hours a week) or full time (36 hours or more), and assign them a value accordingly.

Resulting in the primary occupation variable consisting of 9 categories; (1) Partly or wholly disabled from work, (2) unemployed, (3) Solo-self-employed/freelancers, (4) On-call employees, (5) Temporary contract, (6) independent professionals. (7) Part-time permanent employment, (8) Full-time employment, (9) Not working. Resulting in 66371 responses over the 11 waves included in this study.

3.4.1.4 Profession

Another dimension of precariousness is the skill level of the Profession, lower-skilled workers being more precarious than highly skilled workers (Kalleber, 2009). In the LISS core study on work and schooling contains the following question in each wave (cw*404) *"what is your current profession?"*. The answers are coded in 9 detailed categories running from (1) "higher academic or independent profession (e.g., architect, physician, scholar, academic instructor, engineer) " (2) higher supervisory profession (e.g., manager, director, owner of a large company, supervisory civil servant) (3) intermediate academic or independent profession (e.g., teacher, artist, nurse, social worker, policy assistant), (4) intermediate supervisory or commercial profession (e.g., head representative, department manager, shopkeeper) (5) other mental work (e.g., administrative assistant, accountant, sales assistant, family carer) (6) 6 skilled and supervisory manual work (e.g., car mechanic, foreman, electrician) (7) 7 semi-skilled manual work (e.g., driver, factory worker) (8) unskilled and trained manual work (e.g., cleaner, packer) and (9) agrarian profession (e.g., farm worker, independent agriculturalist)".

Out of this variable, I constructed the profession variable consisting of 4 broader categories as is done in the literature (e.g., Jansen & Lehr, 2022) (1) Manual worker, which includes observations from (6) – (9), (2) non-manual which includes of observations scored (5), (3) non- manual intermediate: consisting of (3 and (4) and (4) non- manual higher consisting of (1) and (2). The non-manual higher category (4) will be used as the reference category.

3.4.1.5 Housing

Housing can add to economic security or insecurity. Are you barely making rent or squatting, or are you a houseowner ? The housing market in the Netherlands is the reason for large wealth inequality in the Netherlands, and the inability to find an affordable room is a longstanding problem (DNB, 2022). I therefore thought it would be an interesting addition to the analysis. In the LISS core study: all respondents are asked (cd*003) "*Are you a tenant, subtenant, or (co-)owner of your current dwelling? In the event that you inhabit more than one dwelling, please consider the most important one.*" Respondents can answer in four categories (1) Tennant, (2) subtenant) (3) (co-)owner (4) other, and as examples, cost-free accommodation or anti-squatting accommodation are mentioned. I used the answers on this variable to construct the Housing variable in which I recoded the answers to rank them from most precarious to least precarious, resulting in the following values (1) other, (2) subtenant (3) tenant and (4) (co) owner. The owner category will be used as the reference category.

Due to the large amount of missing's on this question (almost half of observations), this variable will be left out of some of the analysis but will be used in follow up models to assess its effects none the less

3.4.2 Independent variables: cultural capital

To see if the cultural conflict affects the trust evaluation, we need to capture a respondent's cultural capital. As established in chapter 2, there are two components to establish cultural capital, "elite cultural tastes" and an emerging property, "cosmopolitism" (Noordzij, Van der Waal & De Koster, 2019). The social integration and leisure core study provides us with ample data on respondents' cultural participation over all of the used waves. In the variables (cs*080 through cs*90) Respondents were asked, "Did you visit any one of the following performances or facilities over the past 12 months?" asking after a theatre performance (cs*080), (cs*81) a cabaret performance, (cs*82) a concert of classical music, (cs*83) an opera or operetta, (cs*84) a concert of popular music, pop, jazz, musical or pop opera (cs*85) a dance event, house party (cs*86)a ballet performance, (cs*87) the cinema, (cs*88) a film house, (cs*89) an art gallery and (cs*90) a museum. Originally yes was scored (1) and no (2), the no's were recoded to (0) so I could construct a cultural participation variable by adding the scores of the cultural activities that indicate elite tastes. Looking over the variables I consider the following variables indicative of elite taste: a theatre performance, a cabaret performance, a concert of classical music, an opera or operetta, a ballet performance, visiting the film house, as in the Dutch context, a film house refers to cinemas that tend to offer only art-house cinema and no mainstream movies, an art gallery and a museum. The (cs*84) variable is a border case, as some of the mentioned genres (mainly jazz) indicate elite tastes. However, as the majority of responses due to the popularity of pop music likely refer to more lowbrow cultural activities, this variable was not included in the cultural participation variable.

Additionally, the LISS respondents were asked if they had read a book from front to back in the last month (cs*130), assigning those who read a book a (1) and those who did not a (2). From the cs*130 variable, I generated a book variable, scoring everyone who did read a book a 1 and those who did not read a book a 0. Giving the book variable is another way of capturing someone's cultural capital. Combining both the scores on the book variable and the cultural participation variable, I constructed the Cultural capital variable in which respondents have a possible range of (0), indicating that they have a very low cultural participation and therefore likely a low cultural capital to (9) indicating they have very high cultural participation and therefor likely possess high cultural capital.

Unfortunately, there are no questions in the politics and values survey nor any of the other core studies that ask questions to measure the extent of a citizen's cosmopolitanism in the way this is usually operationalized or through reliable and known scales (Noordzij, Van der Waal & De Koster, 2019). Therefore the elite tastes will be the sole indicator for respondents' cultural capital in this study.

3.4 Control variables

To control for possible confounders, a series of control variables were included in the analysis. Because the analysis is done using individual fixed effects in panel data only time-invariant control variables are operationalized.

3.4.3.1 Age

Age could affect political trust as the preferences of certain age groups are usually overrepresented in politics. Therefore, the age variable is added to the analysis.

3.4.3.2 GDP

Objective macroeconomic performance has long held an important place in political trust issues. While objective macroeconomic performance yields mixed results, some do find a clear association between macro-economic performance and political trust (Van der Meer, 2018). It is therefore important to control for macro-economic performance in this thesis to prevent omitted variable bias. This is usually operationalized through Gross domestic product (GDP) or changes in GDP. Using CBS data, I generated the GDP change variable that assigns each year's economic growth or contraction in percentages. GDP growth fluctuates over the time of this study, with a minimum of -3.7 indicating economic shrinkage and a maximum of 2.9 indicating a GDP growth of 2.9% (CBS, 2022b).

3.4.3.3 CPI

Corruption perception is an important predictor of political trust (Hakhverdian & Mayne, 2012). While regular regressions within the same country do not allow for controlling through the corruption perceptions index, panel data does as the corruption perceptions has changed over time over the years (Transparency international, 2022). Transparency international's Corruption perceptions index (CPI) captures the perceived level of public-sector corruption on a scale from 0 to 100. The CPI is a compound measure consisting of 13 items such as Bribery, Diversion of public funds to state capture using data from 11 institutions that tap the perception of corruption among country experts and business leaders. The higher the score on the CPI the lower corruption in the public sector. The CPI in the Netherlands fluctuates over the timespan of this study and ranges from 89 in wave 1 too 82 in wave 11 (Transparency International, 2021).

3.4.3.4 Subjective evaluation of macro-economic performance

An individual's subjective evaluation of the state of the national economy is an important predictor of political trust in the literature, even if it has yielded mixed results in the past (Van der Meer, 2018). It should therefore be controlled for in order to *properly test the precarious work theory-based hypotheses. Respondents of the LISS panel are asked (ci*007) " how satisfied are you with the current economic situation in the Netherlands?"* on a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means not satisfied at all with the current economic situation in the Netherlands, and 10 means you are entirely satisfied with the current economic situation in the Netherland. An I don't know option (scored as 999) was also included; they are treated as missing. Over 11 waves, there are 58670 responses, of which 2553 are I don't know.

3.5 Research methods – panel regression and model specification

In this part, I will first clarify why pooled OLS regression most likely is not suitable for analysis in this thesis. Then, I will present why individual fixed effects are the preferred option for the analysis in this thesis over other methods such as the random effects regression and the correlated random effects method.

3.5.1 Pooled OLS regression

In this thesis, I am interested in explaining political trust (Y) in terms of individuals' economic precariousness (X_1) and cultural status (X_2), or put differently, how political trust (Y) varies with changes in the X variables in a specific population. The standard method to study the relationship between two or more variables is an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression (Wooldridge, 2016). An OLS model, in its simplest form, begins with the simple linear equation seen in equation 1. This linear equation models the relationship we are interested in by estimating the outcome of Y. In formula 1, Y represents the dependent variable or outcome variable for individual i, β_0 represents the value of Y if the X variables are zero, β_1 stands for the regression coefficient or the change of Y as a result of any change in X1. The ε_I represents the error term, or the difference between the predicted value of Y in the individual based on the regression equation and the actual value Y takes in the data (Wooldridge, 2016, p. 25)

(1) $Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i + \varepsilon_i$

In research, we are often interested in multiple relations. If the models include multiple independent variables to explain the variance of, let's say we ad cultural capital to the model, the equation changes as seen in formula 2.

(2) $Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i + \beta_2 X_i + \varepsilon_i$

For OLS regressions to yield unbiased results the model needs to meet certain assumptions. Firstly, additivity and linearity meaning that the process you are analyzing can be represented by a linear equation. Secondly, independent errors assumption, meaning that the errors of different observations should be uncorrelated. Thirdly, homoscedasticity, the variance in errors for each value of the independent variable should be constant. and fourthly, errors should be normally distributed (Field, 2018)

The data in this thesis has a panel structure; panel data or longitudinal data typically refer to data containing observations of the same individuals, firms or countries over time. For an example of what a panel data structure looks like, see Table 3.1 below. Panel data observations therefore contain at least two dimensions; a cross-sectional dimension, indicated by subscript *i*, and a time dimension, indicated by the subscript *t* (Hsiao, 2007). In this dataset, the observations are nested in people and years. Analyzing panel data using a multivariate OLS model is often called naïve pooling or pooled OLS regression, as you ignore the time and spatial dimensions of the data. This is often problematic, as the mentioned assumptions need to be met to provide unbiased estimates. The independent error assumption is likely violated using this data as values of Y are likely similar within both the spatial dimension *i*, in this thesis, within people, and across the *t* dimension within years. This dependence of the variance in observations within the same person ends up in the error term, therefore making the errors clustered in a person and not independent. The correlation – or put differently, similarity – of observations within the same person or country is called intraclass correlation. Violating the independent error assumption leads to downwardly biased standard errors and biased coefficients and therefore invalidates the results. The statistical issues that stem from naïve pooling could be fixed. However, another reason for not using Naïve pooling is that you lose the ability to model relationships in the data over time, which is one of the main reasons to use panel data to begin with (Wooldridge, 2016).

Table 3.1: An example of a longitudinal data structure

Individual i	**Year t**	**Political trust**	**Cultural capital**
1	1	5	6
1	2	6	8
1	3	5	6
2	1	7	7

2	2	8	8
2	3	7	7
…	…	..	..

3.5.2 Panel regression modeling options.

In order to take advantage of the spatial and temporal variation in the data in regression analysis and to remove the bias that comes from naïve pooling, there are several modeling options available, all with their drawbacks and advantages. (Wooldridge, 2016)

First, there is the choice of a first differenced regression model or a multilevel model such as fixed effects or random effects. The first-differenced equation is a simple transformation, as can be seen in formula 3.

$$\Delta Y_i = \boldsymbol{\beta}_0 + \boldsymbol{\beta}_1 \Delta Xi + \Delta \varepsilon_i$$

In the first difference model, we only model the change in variables, which allows us to utilize the panel structure of the data (Wooldridge, 2016, p. 413). Applied to this thesis, this would mean that ΔY_i represents the change in political trust in individual *i* between subsequent periods of *t*, and ΔXi represents the change in for example cultural capital for individual I. By only looking at the changes in the variables, we effectively take out the baseline level variance of those variables. By only leaving the changes over time, we effectively remove the correlation between units, and that variance is the source of bias when estimating models using this data. A different solution to this problem is using individual fixed effects models, sometimes called the dummy variable regression (Wooldridge, 2016, 438). The fixed-effect equation in its simplest form before the dummy transformation can be seen in equation 4.

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_t x_{it} + \alpha_i + \varepsilon_i \; t = 1, 2, \ldots, T.$$

Much like the linear regression model, we have an outcome variable (Y_{it}), but this time with a subscript *it* in which *i* denotes the individual at timepoint t. Applied to this thesis, political trust of individual *i* at timepoint *t*. This subscript is also present with the regression coefficient indicating the value of X for that individual at that time point. α_I refers to the unobserved effect, or intercept for person *i*, which are functionally the same in this equation, and contains the time-invariant differences for individual *i*, and finally the ε for person *i* at time t (Wooldridge, 2016 p. 430 – 436). To tackle the intraclass correlation problem we then add dummy variables for each individual *i* to the model, see equation 5. The D's in the equation stands for the dummy variable for one individual in the dataset.

$$Y_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{it} + \beta_2 D_1 + \beta_3 D_2 \dots \beta k D_{ik \dots} \beta \, \varepsilon_i$$

The model contains N-1 dummy regressor for each individual in the data, therefore controlling for the individual level differences and the intraclass correlation in individuals. This is also called the within transformation as it only leaves the variance within individuals over time and no between-individual variance. What's interesting about this model is that it gives an estimation of the individual fixed effects and controls for all time-invariant personal differences controlling for a lot of potential confounders at once.

When T=2, there are no substantive differences in the results between individual fixed effects and the first differenced model, but the estimates are not exactly the same as soon as you have 3 or more waves in your data (Wooldridge, 2016, p. 468). The choice then hinges on efficiency according to Wooldridge (2016, p. 440). If the idiosyncratic error or in $u_{it\ is}$ partly determined by serial correlation. The variance in the error being determined by an unobserved time component that is dependent on itself, thenfixed effects is better than First differenced model. This is rather hard to test according to Woolridge, but often theoretically likely in most panel data., therefor fixed effects seem to be the right fit for this thesis.

Then there is the choice between fixed effects, random effects, and the correlated random effects approach (or RCE). There are 2 downsides to fixed effects because as you remove the variance between clusters, which in the case of this thesis are observations clustered in individuals, you throw out the explanatory variance between individuals. The first downside to this is that the between-individual variance might offer interesting results or explanations to explain the difference between individuals that are not captured by within-individual variation. The second downside is that you cannot control for time-invariant variables because the fixed effect dummy takes out individual factors that do not change (Angrist & Pischke, 2008). Random effects models do allow you to include time-invariant explanations because it controls for clustering by allowing the coefficients to vary per cluster instead of controlling for that effect through a unit dummy and taking that variance out. Random effects do not have the downsides of fixed effects but introduces some of its own, as it needs additional assumptions and requirements to lead to unbiased results. The most important requirement is the assumption that the unobserved effect is uncorrelated with each explanatory variable in all time periods, this is a difficult claim to make as unobserved effects, for example, an individual's intelligence will always have a relationship with explanatory variables. The fixed-effects model allows for arbitrary correlation between the unobserved effect (Wooldridge, 2016, pp. 442 - 444) and therefore is widely seen as the more convincing model using panel data.

Still, if key variables in the explanation are time invariant becomes a matter of being willing to assume the unobserved effect is serially uncorrelated, which can partly be helped by including as many time-invariant individual characteristics as possible. Lastly, there is the correlated random effects approach, which by controlling for the average levels of explanatory variables, also controls for the unobserved effects, therefore providing a nice middle ground between FE and RE while allowing to estimate time-invariant models. However, this is exceedingly difficult and rather unwise in unbalanced panels, according to Wooldridge (2016). The dataset used for this thesis is unbalanced; therefore, the fixed effects dummy regression approach seems the right way to go for the modeling in this thesis.

Sometimes a Hausman test is done to determine whether there are systematic differences in the coefficient estimates. If there are no systematic differences, this is taken to mean that FE is the better option. I decided to test whether Random effects, fixed effects, or correlated random effects were the right approach, however, the Hausmann test cannot be when heteroskedasticity is present I therefore used Shaffer & Stillman's (2006) procedure. There were no systematic differences, once again underlining that fixed effects are the right approach.

4. results of analysis

4.1 Panel

Having merged all waves, there are 22801 respondents that have no missing on any of the key variables this thesis is interested in, which contain 61994 observations for political trust over the 11 waves included in this study. 2338 individuals participated in every single wave and every single study of the LISS survey. For a description of the panel and other common patterns of participation, see appendix C. This panel is unbalanced, but this does not pose a direct problem for estimating fixed effects models. This could pose a challenge for other models, such as random effects models, if the reason behind respondent attrition is part of the unobserved effect (Woolridge, 2016, pp. 440 – 441). CentERdata has assessed the attrition, and there are no systematic attrition patterns that could bias the estimates (De Vos, 2009).

4.2 Descriptives

This thesis is interested in what can explain the differences in political trust between and within individuals over time. Before we can proceed with the analysis, we need to establish that there is indeed sufficient variation in both the dependent and independent variables. Table 4.1 displays the descriptive statistics of the variables used in this thesis. It is important to note that the descriptive table does not include variables that capture time-invariant personal characteristics as they cannot be used in fixed effect analysis - variables such as gender and education. While gender identity might occasionally change, this most likely will not happen often enough to be able to be included in the models. For this reason, education was also excluded, as the majority of people's educational development stops after they have graduated. Including variables that do not change as much in fixed effects hampers the quality of estimations. On the other hand, the skill level of their current job or occupation changes more frequently over a lifetime. These personal characteristics might very well affect political trust but will not influence omitted variable bias as individual fixed effects control for, or partials out, individual characteristics due to how these models are estimated (Wooldridge, 2016).

In line with expectations, in the occupation categories, people in a standard employment relation - both full-time employment (29.61%) and standard part-time employment (20.20%) - are in the majority. A sizable portion of the population is part of the not working category, which is also expected for such a broad category (35.57%). Independent professionals make up a tiny percentage of the population (0.81%), but 488 observations still contain more than enough information to be included in the analysis.

The CPI and GDP change variables contain a relatively high number of observations as all respondents in the dataset were assigned a value of those variables based on the year of the study using data from

CBS and Transparency International. Age also has a high number of observations as each respondent's age was known. As housing has relatively few observations after exclusion compared to other variables, separate models that include the housing categories will be estimated.

The descriptive statistics for the working population sample can be found in Appendix D. Job security has relatively few observations as that question is only asked to respondents in a certain employment relationship. However, it is interesting to note that profession is also only about the current job, has almost three times more observations than job security.

Table 4.1: *Descriptive Statistics general sample*

	Valid N	*Min.*	*Max.*	*Mean / percentage*	*Standard Deviation*
Dependent Variable					
Political trust	51,485	0.00	10.00	5.10	1.88
Independent variables					
Sufficiency of Income	51,746	0.00	10.00	6.63	1.96
Occupation (dummies)	60,000				
Disabled from work	1,904	0.00	1.00	3.17%	
Unemployed	769	0.00	1.00	1.28%	
Solo self-employed/freelancer	3,170	0.00	1.00	5.28%	
On call	1,413	0.00	1.00	12.09%	
Temporary contract	1,030	0.00	1.00	13.81%	
Independent professional	488	0.00	1.00	0.81%	
Part-time employment	12,118	0.00	1.00	20.20%	
Full time employment (ref.)	17,764	0.00	1.00	29.61%	
Not working or seeking job	21,344		1.00	35.57%	
Housing (dummies)	37,751				
Other	706	0.00	1.00	1.87%	
Sub-tenant	313	0.00	1.00	0.83%	
Tenant	11,502	0.00	1.00	30.47%	
Owner (reference)	25,230	0.00	1.00	66.83%	
Cultural capital	65,439	0	9	2.03	1.85
Control variables					
Age	122,999	0	105	39.97	21.92
CPI	122,999	82	89	85.47	2.87

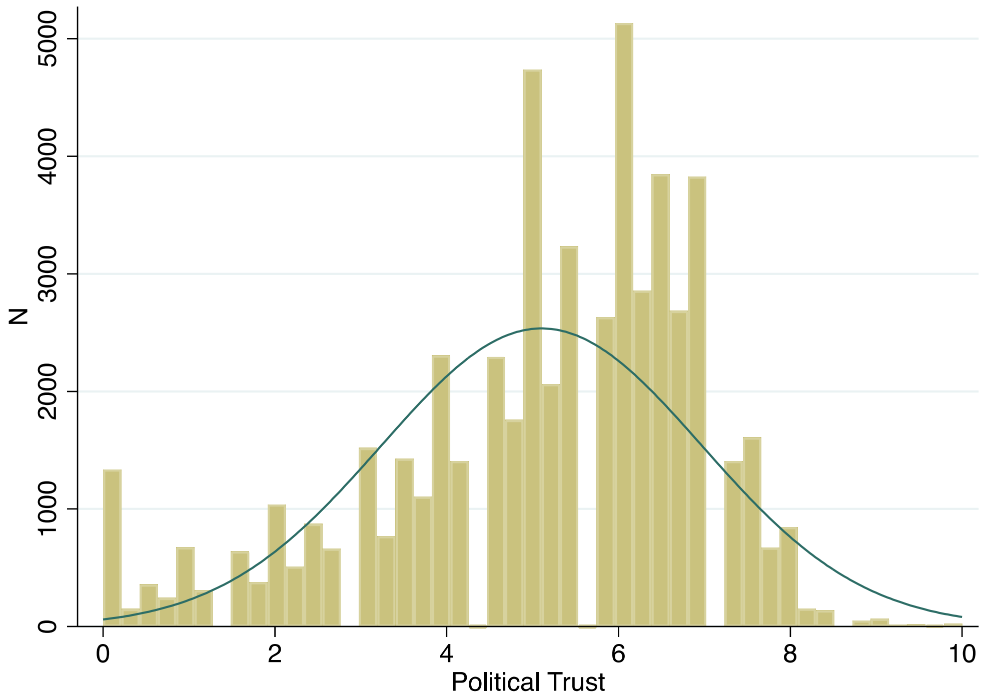
GDP-change	122,999	-3.70	2.90	0.99	1.90
Net Income	104,764	0	298535	1246.80	3723.57
Evaluation national economy	47,406	0	10.00	5.47	1.70
Valid N (*Listwise*)	31,377				

Source: *LISS panel wave 1 - 11 (2008- 2019), Transparency International (2022), CBS (2022b)*

4.3 Political trust over the period of 2008– 2018

This thesis examines what explains differences in political trust. In order to do that, we first need to establish that there is indeed variation in political trust between and within respondents. In Figures 4.1 and 4.2, we can see that there is indeed substantial variation in political trust between individuals, and the distribution of values also differs over the different waves of the LISS panel. In Figure 4.1, the distribution of political trust is visualized, and we can observe that the answers are more or less normally distributed but slightly skewed to the left. This is common with political trust research, as there are, relatively speaking more people who lose all trust in politics than there are people who completely trust their institutions and politicians (Hetherington, 1998)

Figure 4.1 Distribution of values of the dependent variable Political trust.

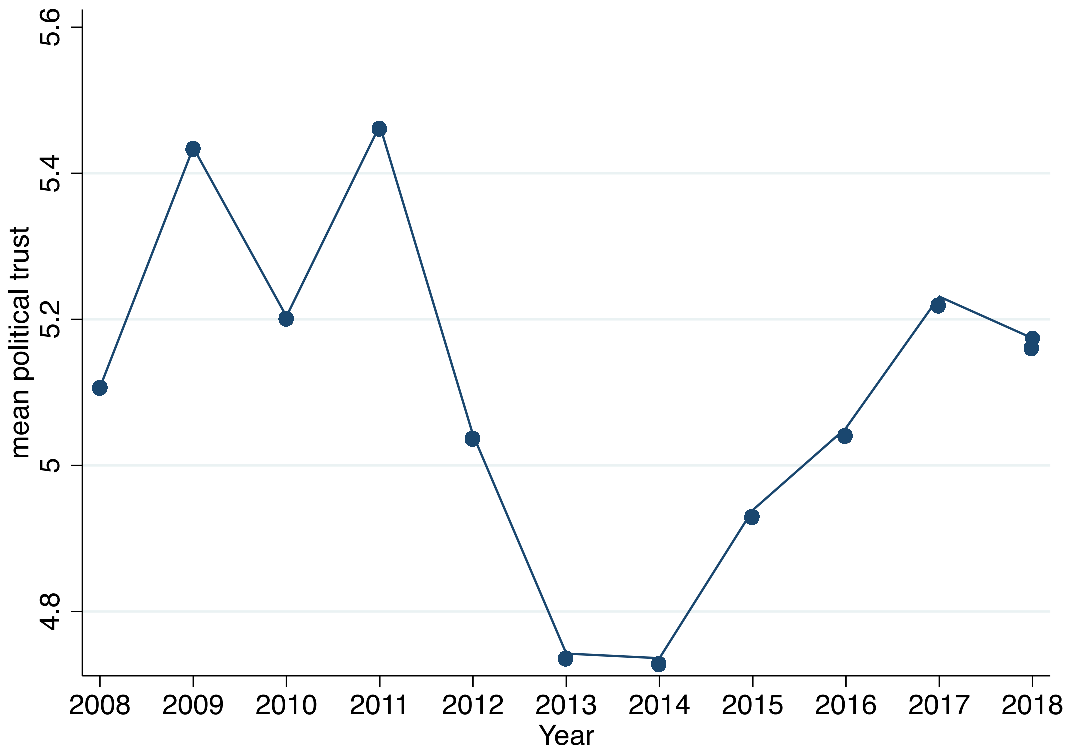


Source: *LISS panel (2008-2019)*

Figure 4.2 visualizes the mean value of the political trust scale. Over the time period of this study, the mean value of political trust over all respondents per wave has fluctuated between roughly 4.8 and 5.4.

Notably, from 2010, we see a sharp drop off from the high of 2011 to a level below 4.8 in 2013, where the value of trust bottoms out, stays there in 2015 and eventually rises to 5.2 in 2016. The decline and rise of mean levels of political trust roughly coincide with the peak and resolution of the euro crisis (Ray, 2017).

Figure 4.2 Mean value of political trust



Source: *LISS panel data, wave 1 -11(2008-2019).*

4. 3 Checking for assumptions that were not covered yet

Like other regression models, fixed effects models need to satisfy certain assumptions and criteria to make unbiased estimates. Some of these assumptions were covered in the methods chapter, but others can only be done after estimation.

4.3.1 Homoskedasticity

Homescedasticity: at each level of the predictor variable, the residuals should be constant (Field, 2018, p. 387) because otherwise, confidence intervals and significance tests are biased. Heteroskedasticity is a common problem, especially with data related to economics, as careers and therefore, income and other related variables diverge more widely over time. The regular procedures to test for heteroscedasticity do not work for panel regressions, but Stata offers a modified Wald test for GroupWise heteroskedasticity in fixed effects regression models (Baum, 2001). This test showed that heteroskedasticity was indeed present in my model. There are two proposed solutions to this – one is using robust standard errors that are a little less efficient but still offer valid confidence intervals and significance tests under heteroscedasticity. The second option is using WLS regression, in which each case is weighted by a function of its variance, giving observations with smaller residuals more importance in the regression than those with bigger errors. The most common approach is robust standard errors as weights, if inaccurate, can bias estimates further instead of improving them (Angrist & Pischke, 2008). As I am already using robust standard errors to correct household clustering, this is already fixed.

4.3.2 Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity occurs when independent observations are correlated, or in other words, if they overlap or explain the same variance in the independent variable. If multicollinearity is present, this can lead to skewed or misleading results. We can compute a variance inflation factor (VIF), which indicates whether a predictor has strong multicollinearity. Field (2018) suggests the following guidelines – an individual variables VIF should not be greater than 10, the average VIF should not be substantially greater than 1 and tolerance below 0.2 indicate a problem. There is no problematic degree of multicollinearity in my models with a mean VIF of 1.42. For an overview of the post-estimation test for multicollinearity, see Appendix E.

4.4 Results of analysis.

4.4.1 Analysis of results in the general population sample.

In Table 4.2, the results of my analysis of the general sample are presented. In models 1 and 2, the effects of precariousness and cultural capital on political trust are modeled in an individual dummy fixed effects regression. In model 3, the effects of both the precariousness indicators and cultural capital on political trust are modeled. In model 4, the same relationships are modeled, but the control variables relating to traditional predictors of political trust are also included in the model. The F-statistics for each subsequent model show there are significant differences between the models and solely using the mean to predict political trust. Looking at the different R^2 provided, we can see that the models explain between 0.010 to 0.054, meaning that model 4 explains 5.4% of the variation in political trust in this sample. Such R^2 values are not uncommon in political trust research and are to be expected when only looking at variance within individuals. Still, it means that the relationships found explain relatively little variance in political trust. In M1, we see that only sufficiency of income has a statistically significant effect on political trust. The coefficient (0.041) indicates that for every increase in income sufficiency, an individual’s trust increases by 0.041 ($p < 0.001$) when controlling for time-invariant characteristics of respondents and other dimensions of precariousness. The other precariousness indicators included in this model have no significant effect on political trust. In M2, we see that cultural capital, when controlling for nothing else, does have a significant effect on political trust when controlling for time invariant individual characteristics through unit level dummies and age. In this model, each increase in cultural capital leads to an increase in political trust within individuals by 0.015 ($p < 0.05$), but in a relatively empty model, this does not say a lot substantively besides that there is some relationship there. In M3, both precariousness indicators and cultural capital are included. In this model, we see that sufficiency of income remains significant, with a coefficient of 0.039.

Interestingly enough, when controlling for cultural capital, we see that the non-working category of the occupation variable does have a statistically negative effect (-0.109) compared to the reference category of standard employment. This indicates that switching from standard employment to not working results in a decrease in political trust. Cultural capital remains statistically significant, and its effect size increases to 0.024 ($p<0.05$). In M4, the traditional explanations for political trust are also controlled for. The table shows that changes in all the control variables have a significant effect on political trust. The Corruption Perceptions Index has a particularly large effect (0.095 at $p<0.001$). Not a single hypothesized relationship, neither related to precariousness nor cultural capital, stays statistically significant when controlling for personal characteristics through fixed effects -Net income, age, GDP change, CPI and the subjective evaluation of the national economy.

Models 5 to 8 follow the same model structure as models 1 to 4 and test the same relationships, but this time with the inclusion of the housing situation of individuals. For the sake of thoroughness and because the sample size is likely different, model 6, which solely tests for cultural capital, is also included. The F-statistics show that these models are significantly better at predicting political trust than just using the mean of political trust. The R^2 show that these models explain slightly more variation in the sample than models 1 to 4, ranging from 1.5% to 5.9% of the variance. In model 5, we see that none of the housing dummies has a significant negative effect on political trust in reference to houseowners. Sufficiency of income remains statistically significant (0.043 $p<0.001$). Interestingly enough, having a temporary contract has a positive and statistically significant effect in this model, meaning that respondents with a temporary contract have 0.261 more trust when compared to those in standard full-time employment. Interestingly, the temporary contract dummies effect takes the opposite direction than was theoretically expected, having more political trust than those in standard employment. Maybe those in temporary contracts appreciate the social security government could provide in case their temporary contract ends, but this is pure speculation. The not working category has a statistically significant lower level of political trust, having 0.094 ($p<0.01$) lower political trust than those in standard employment. The control variable age remains significant. In model 6, we see that cultural capital also has a significant positive effect on political trust, controlling for personal difference through fixed effect and age and the effect size has increased, hinting that the sample that only includes people that have answered the housing question is different from the sample as a whole. In model 7, the precariousness indicators remain statistically significant when controlling for cultural capital. The not working categories effect even increases, but cultural capital's effect on political trust loses its significance in this configuration. In model 8, all the control variables controlling for traditional explanations of political trust are included, sufficiency of income remains statistically significant, and the not-working category loses its significance. This means that in this model, every increase in the feeling of sufficiency of income results in a 0.020 increase in a respondent's political trust.

4.3.2 Hypotheses in the analysis of the general sample

In chapter 2, I formulated two testable hypotheses applicable to this sample. Using models 1 to 8 to come to a preliminary evaluation. Relating to precariousness, I formulated H1: "If an individual's precariousness changes due to a change in the (a) sufficiency of their income, (b) occupation, (c) the skill level of their profession or (d) their housing situation, I expect political trust to change negatively or positively accordingly" I can reject hypothesis 1d as a change in housing situation does not affect political trust within individuals over the studied time period. Sufficiency of income is proven to have a significant effect on political trust within individuals relatively consistently, but importantly not in M4, which controls for procedural fairness and economic performance indicators. I, therefore, consider hypothesis 1 at least partly supported. Some categories of primary occupation do have a significant effect on changes in political trust within individuals in some of the models. However, temporary contracts effect does not take the expected direction. Moreover, I consider hypothesis 1b rejected as the not working category and temporary contracts significance fluctuates and fades when controlling for procedural fairness and standard measures of economic performance. Cultural capital's effect is significant in M2, M3, M6, and M7. However, it is not significant in the models, including control variables. I therefor consider hypothesis 3 rejected in the general population. Changes in net income, the evaluation of the economy, CPI and GDP all impact political trust in individuals consistently at high levels of significance. They, therefore, seem better at explaining changes in political trust within individuals over time in the general population than my hypothesized theories.

Table 4.2 *Fixed effects panel regression of the effects of precariousness and cultural capital on political trust*

	Model 1 Political trust coef	Model 2 Political trust coef	Model 3 Political trust coef	Model 4 Political trust coef	Model 5 Political trust coef	Model 6 Political trust coef	Model 7 Political trust coef	Model 8 Political trust coef
Sufficiency of income	0.041***	-	0.039***	0.015	0.043***	-	0.043***	0.020*
	(0.007)		(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008		(0.009)	(0.009)
Occupation (ref.: full-time standard employment)								
Disabled from work	-0.054	-	-0.101	-0.043	-0.054	-	-0.033	0.026
	(0.079)		(0.092)	(0.089)	(0.096)		(0.109)	(0.105)
Unemployed	-0.086	-	-0.146	-0.033	0.009	-	-0.040	0.072
	(0.086)		(0.095)	(0.093)	(0.097)		(0.105)	(0.104)
Solo self-employed	0.004	-	-0.033	-0.006	0.024	-	0.007	0.018
	(0.073)		(0.084)	(0.081)	(0.091)		(0.099)	(0.096)
on call	-0.082	-	-0.148	-0.100	-0.054	-	-0.120	-0.086
	(0.091)		(0.114)	(0.110)	(0.117)		(0.137)	(0.134)
Temporary contract	0.090	-	0.064	0.092	0.261*	-	0.220	0.229
	(0.104)		(0.123)	(0.123)	(0.117)		(0.131)	(0.131)
Independent professional	-0.001	-	-0.172	-0.171	0.133	-	-0.062	-0.071
	(0.173)		(0.238)	(0.230)	(0.216)		(0.272)	(0.262)
Part-time worker	-0.000	-	-0.037	-0.011	-0.068	-	-0.065	-0.042
	(0.042)		(0.050)	(0.049)	(0.052)		(0.061)	(0.060)
Not working	-0.040	-	-0.109*	-0.030	-0.094**	-	-0.116*	-0.039
	(0.038)		(0.049)	(0.048)	(0.047)		(0.058)	(0.057)
Housing situation (ref.: house owners)								
Squatting & free housing	-	-	-	-	-0.103	-	-0.107	-0.135
					(0.211)		(0.212)	(0.201)
Sub-tenant	-	-	-	-	0.091	-	0.004	0.032

					(0.248)		(0.269)	(0.269)
Tenant	-	-	-	-	0.006	-	-0.009	-0.027
					(0.081)		(0.090)	(0.087)
Cultural capital	-	0.015*	0.024**	0.006		0.021*	0.025**	0.006
		(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.008)		(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Net Income	-	-	0.000*	0.000*		0.000***	0.000**	0.000*
			(0.000)	(0.000)		(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
AGE	-0.031***	-0.026***	-0.036***	0.039***	-0.036***	-0.033***	-0.040***	0.044***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.004)		(0.004)	(0.006)
GDP change	-	-	-	-0.055***	-	-	-	-0.057***
				(0.006)				(0.006)
CPI	-	-	-	0.095***	-	-	-	0.103***
				(0.006)				(0.007)
Subjective evaluation of national economy	-	-	-	0.081***	-	-	-	0.076***
				(0.008)				(0.009)
Constant	6.403***	6.326***	6.710***	-5.632***		6.888***	7.048***	-6.648***
	(0.148)	(0.125)	(0.169)	(0.697)			(0.218)	(0.803)
Observations	37,463	47,735	31,377	31,377	25,626	27,643	22,063	22,063
R-squared	0.010	0.006	0.014	0.054	0.015	0.010	0.017	0.059
Number of individuals	8,815	11,609	7,598	7,598	6,501	6,910	5,373	5,373

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05
Source: *LISS panel wave 1 - 11 (2008- 2019), Transparency International (2022), CBS (2022b)*

Table 4.3 *Fixed effects panel regression of the effects of precariousness and cultural capital in the working population*

	Model 9 Political trust coef	Model 10 Political trust coef	Model 11 Political trust coef	Model 12 Political trust coef	Model 13 Political trust coef	Model 14 Political trust coef	Model 15 Political trust coef	Model 16 Political trust coef
Sufficiency of income	0.030**	-	0.028*	0.003	0.033*		0.031*	0.008
	(0.011)		(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.013)		(0.014)	(0.014)
Job security	-0.001*	-	-0.001*	-0.000	-0.001		-0.001	-0.000
	(0.000)		(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)		(0.001)	(0.001)
Profession (ref.: non-manual high)								
Manual work	-0.246	-	-0.239	-0.142	-0.253		-0.217	-0.119
	(0.179)		(0.199)	(0.194)	(0.216)		(0.226)	(0.224)
Non-manual lower	-0.168	-	-0.236	-0.132	-0.061		-0.126	-0.039
	(0.128)		(0.140)	(0.136)	(0.151)		(0.163)	(0.157)
Non-manual intermediate	-0.046	-	-0.069	-0.004	0.014		-0.034	0.007
	(0.088)		(0.097)	(0.094)	(0.096)		(0.105)	(0.101)
Occupation (ref.: full-time standard employment)								
Unemployed	-0.118	-	-0.145	-0.055	0.088		0.071	0.112
	(0.267)		(0.319)	(0.297)	(0.286)		(0.327)	(0.306)
Solo self-employed	0.196*	-	0.234	0.228	0.374***		0.422**	0.402**
	(0.118)		(0.134)	(0.125)	(0.145)		(0.161)	(0.148)
On call	-0.036	-	-0.148	-0.090	0.029		-0.079	-0.098
	(0.282)		(0.317)	(0.295)	(0.332)		(0.350)	(0.326)
Temporary contract	0.126	-	0.241	0.228	0.287		0.381*	0.318
	(0.169)		(0.173)	(0.167)	(0.168)		(0.183)	(0.178)
Independent professional	0.284	-	0.236	0.267	0.388		0.341	0.353
	(0.431)		(0.473)	(0.453)	(0.420)		(0.470)	(0.457)
Part-time worker	0.006	-	-0.040	-0.030	-0.023		-0.047	-0.044
	(0.065)		(0.072)	(0.071)	(0.078)		(0.085)	(0.084)

Housing situation (ref. house owner)								
Squatting	-	-	-	-	-0.427	-	-0.217	-0.243
					(0.341)		(0.304)	(0.278)
Sub-tenant	-	-	-	-	0.148	-	0.212	0.248
					(0.285)		(0.306)	(0.306)
Tenant	-	-	-	-	-0.035	-	-0.072	-0.065
					(0.110)		(0.117)	(0.114)
cultural capital	-	0.017*	0.020	-0.002	-	0.023*	0.025	0.002
		(0.008)	(0.012)	(0.012)		(0.011)	(0.014)	(0.013)
Net Income	-	-	0.000**	0.000*	-		0.000**	0.000
			(0.000)	(0.000)			(0.000)	(0.000)
AGE	-0.026***	-0.020***	-0.033***	0.048***	-0.031***	-0.026***	-0.033***	0.056***
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.009)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.009)
GDP change	-	-	-	-0.051***	-	-	-	-0.056***
				(0.008)				(0.009)
CPI	-	-	-	0.103***	-	-	-	0.110***
				(0.008)				(0.010)
Subjective evaluation of national economy	-	-	-	0.092***	-	-	-	0.079***
				(0.012)				(0.015)
Constant	6.306***	6.054***	6.645***	-6.512***	6.469***	6.382***	6.709***	-7.249***
	(0.224)	(0.157)	(0.253)	(0.992)	(0.272)	(0.227)	(0.297)	(1.129)
Observations	17,089	30,938	14,547	14,547	11,366	16,733	9,846	9,846
R-squared	0.007	0.003	0.011	0.059	0.010	0.006	0.013	0.061
Number of individuals	4,521	9899	3,899	3,899	3,198	5,497	2,667	2,667

Robust standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.001, ** p<0.01, * p<0.05
Source: *LISS panel wave 1 - 11 (2008- 2019), Transparency International (2022), CBS (2022b)*

4.3.3 Analysis of results in the working population

In models 9 to 12, the effects of cultural capital and precariousness on political trust in the working population are modeled. These models also include job security and the skill level of the respondent's current job, which are only applicable to the working population. The F-statistics show that the models are significantly better at predicting political trust than just using the mean value of political trust, indicating that the models fit the data. The R^2 capturing within variance range from 0.007 to 0.059, indicating that they explain up to 5.9% of the variation in political trust in the working sample. In model 9, sufficiency of income again has a highly significant effect on political trust but with a smaller effect size than in the general population (0.030 $p<0.01$). Perceived job security is also statistically significant, with an effect of -0.001 ($p< 0.5$). This effect might seem small, but as the range of this variable is 0-100, this indicates a serious effect. Being solo self-employed also has a significant effect – with respondents who are solo self-employed having 0.196 more political trust than those in standard full-time employment. As with temporary contracts in previous models, the effect of being solo self-employed does not run in the expected direction. Skill level does not seem to have a significant effect on political trust when compared to non-manual high-skilled workers. In M10, cultural capital has a significant effect on political trust. In M11, both the effects of precariousness and cultural capital on political trust in the working population are modeled. In this model, sufficiency of income, job security and being solo self-employed remains statistically significant. In model 12, all the variables from models 9-11 are included, and the control variables are added. Like in the general sample, none of the theorized relationships remains statistically significant when controlling for the traditional explanation of political trust in the working population.

Models 13 to 16 estimate the same relationships as models 9 to 12, but with the additions of the housing situation dummies. The F-statistics for these models show that they are a good fit for the data. In M13, sufficiency of income and solo self-employed are statistically significant, but again in the opposite direction as hypothesized. The added housing situation dummies have no significant effects in the working population sample as in the main sample, nor does job security have an effect in the models, including the housing situation. In M14, cultural capital is again significant, but even in a relatively empty model, it has a relatively low p-value. In model 15, most precariousness indicators have no effect on political trust within individuals when also controlling for cultural capital. Sufficiency of income, solo self-employed and temporary contract do have a significant effect, but the effect of a temporary contract is in the opposite direction as expected. This indicates that those in a temporary contract have more political trust than those in standard employment. Cultural capital's significance fades when controlling for precariousness. In M16, all the precariousness and cultural capital variables and the control variables related to economic performance and procedural fairness are included. Only the solo self-employed variable is significant, they have 0.402 more trust compared to standard employees

($p<0.001$) while controlling for unobserved personal characteristics through fixed effects and the included time-varying control variables. All the included control variables - Age, Net Income, CPI and subjective evaluation of the economy - are highly statistically significant.

4.3.4 Hypothesis 2 and 3 in the working population.

In chapter 2, I hypothesized that "If an individual's precariousness changes due to a change in the (a) sufficiency of their income, (b) their job security (c) their employment status, (d) the skill level of their profession or (e) their housing situation, I expect political trust to change negatively or positively accordingly." In the working population, sufficiency of income is not significant when controlling for unobserved individual characteristics- other dimensions of precariousness, measures of economic performance and corruption perception index. I therefore consider h2a rejected in this sample. Job security follows a similar pattern - while it is still significant in models 9 and 10, its significance fades when controlling for other factors. I, therefore, consider h2b rejected.

Moving on to h2c - the effect of employment status - the majority of occupation status categories in reference to those in full-time standard employment have no significant effect on political trust with the exception of solo self-employed. Being solo self-employed, contrary to expectation, has a significant positive effect on political trust. Looking at the models including housing situation, temporary contract is significant in M15, also in the opposite direction than expected. I, therefore, consider h2c rejected as most categories have no significant effect on political trust, and the effect takes the opposite direction. The Skill level of employees does not seem to have a significant effect on political trust - the effects of skill level categories in reference to non-manual high-skilled work take the expected direction, but none are significant. Therefore I consider hypothesis h2d rejected in the working population. The respondents' housing situation in reference to house owners takes the expected direction, but none of its effects are significant. Hypothesis 2e is, therefore, also rejected. The fact that sufficiency of income's significance fades in M12 and M16 in the working population is an interesting finding and contrary to expectations.

On the other hand, seeing the results, it is an intuitively understandable result nonetheless. The worker's sample excludes people more dependent on the government's social security payments. Another key difference between the regular sample and the working sample is that the solo self-employed have more political trust.

I consider "hypothesis 3: as people acquire more cultural capital over time, their political trust will also increase and vice versa" to be rejected. The cultural capital effect took the expected direction and, in some models, had a statistically significant effect on the political trust scale, but that significance faded when the models took into account traditional measures of economic performance and procedural fairness.

5. conclusion and discussion

5.1 Discussion and reflection

In this part of the chapter, I will discuss the findings of my analysis and highlight the limitations and compromises that might have affected the results before answering the research question in the conclusion. The goal of this thesis was to examine what explains differences in individuals' political trust in the Netherlands between 2008 and 2018. More specifically, whether an individual's economic circumstances and cultural status can better explain differences in individuals' political trust than procedural fairness and (macro) economic performance theory.

The data indicates that there is significant variation in political trust over time in the Netherlands, even if the Netherlands is considered a relatively stable and high-trust country. Moving on to the analysis, I then examined the data on political trust through various configurations of fixed effects models. Specifically, I examined the relationship between various indicators of economic insecurity as discussed in the literature on precarious work theory and political trust. Additionally, I used cultural participation as an indicator for someone's cultural capital, indicating whether someone has a high or low cultural status and whether changes in this position affected political trust. The results of the analysis show that an individual's cultural capital and precariousness have some relation with changes in the level of political trust. However, the best explanation for changes over time within individuals remains corruption perception and the evaluation of the country's economic performance and macro-economic performance.

The majority of measures that were used as indicators for someone's economic precariousness indicate that changes in that economic position do not significantly affect political trust in the LISS respondents. Changes in sufficiency of income had a significant effect on political trust relatively consistently. However, that significance tended to fade in 3 out of 4 models, including traditional explanations of political trust. It is therefore likely not a better way to operationalize the relationship between economic performance than the measures ordinarily used, at least when looking at changes of political trust over time within individuals, in both the population in general and the working population.

Respondent's occupation and the characteristics of their employment showed mixed results. Those in the not working category had significantly lower political trust in reference to those in full-time standard employment in some of the models analyzing political trust in the general population. This finding might be due to the fact that a portion of that category, namely those who are retired and students, are dependent on government schemes for a proportion of their income. Any dissatisfaction with their financial situation might therefore be attributed more directly to the government than those in other occupation categories. In model 5, those with a temporary contract have a significantly higher political trust, but not in other models. This takes the opposite direction to what was theorized, which might be due to the fact that those in temporary contract stand to benefit more from government social security schemes if they do not get a long-term contract when compared to those in standard employment.

In the working population, being solo self-employed were found to have higher political trust than those in standard employment. This finding could indicate several things. Firstly, it could indicate that those who are solo self-employed enjoy the advantages being solo self-employed brings when compared to standard employment. While you might be more precarious, you are your own employer which might have its own advantages such as having more control over your working life, or having better pay than if you would have been an employee. Another reason for this finding could be that the most basic level of social security the government offers are more important to them than those in standard employment relationships, as the benefits those in standard employment receive are paid by the employer, leading to a more positive evaluation of the objects of political trust.

Changes in cultural capital did not significantly affect political trust in any of the models that included controls for other explanations of political trust. This indicates that changes in the traditional indicator of someone’s cultural position did not have a significant effect on a scale capturing political trust across four different objects.

Maybe the most interesting findings of this thesis can then be found in the microlevel test of what determines changes in political trust over time within individuals. Changes in Corruption Perception Index not only seem to determine differences in political trust between individuals and countries but also significantly affect political trust within individuals.
This also goes for the economic performance related control variables. Both the evaluation of the state of the economy, changes in GDP and changes in net income affect political trust within individuals to a significant degree over the periods of this study.

However, due to the limitations of this study, these findings should be interpreted with a certain degree of caution. Due to the strict assumptions of random effects models and the structure of this data, this thesis only examined the variance in political trust within individuals, as in my view only a fixed effects model using cluster and heteroskedasticity robust standard errors could yield unbiased results using this data. While examining political trust within individuals is interesting in itself, it represents a relatively small percentage of the variance in political trust, which can mainly be found between individuals rather than within individuals. Differences in precariousness and cultural capital might very well be able to explain differences in political trust between individuals even if they do not explain differences within individuals, but this could not be analyzed using this data. Moreover, while these models control for time-invariant characteristics through individual-level fixed effects, they do not allow for the estimation of those effects in an analytically interesting way. For example, individual-level fixed effects do not allow me to quantify how factors such as gender or education affect political trust.

This thesis also did not analyze any potential interactions between precariousness and some of the control variables. While the evaluation of the state of the national economy and net income fit more in the traditional operationalization of economic determinants of political trust, they also potentially say something about a degree of precarity. It could very well be that the effects of precariousness interact with other economic determinants of political trust. Maybe the effect of net income on political trust is bigger among individuals that are precarious when compared to individuals that are more economically secure, but these tests were beyond the scope of this study.

It could also be argued that due to limitations in the data, this study could not fully test whether there is a status-based cultural conflict as only cultural capital could be measured in this data, and cosmopolitism and other indicators of cultural status could not be operationalized using the LISS panel data. Data used in this study also did not allow me to test whether the inclusion of cultural capital lowered the effect of education on political trust, whether cultural capital interacts with certain supply side dynamics in politics or whether the salience of cultural issues affected the relationship between cultural capital and political trust.

Another limitation of this thesis is that it solely studied political trust in the Netherlands. While it did this over a relatively long timespan at yearly intervals, it still had a limited scope by focusing on one country. As the economic context and the nature of employment relations are highly dependent on national legislation and the structure of the national economy, findings could be different in other countries. The same goes for cultural capital and the status-based conflict, as the salience of cultural issues and cultural status is likely different in different democracies. Despite these limitations, this thesis has some relevant findings to political trust research and society at large, which I will address in the conclusion.

5.2 Conclusion

Political trust is currently understood as a citizen's evaluation of the objects of political trust. However, the theories and analysis on what explains differences in political trust have a better explanation for differences in political trust between countries and neglect the individual's experience and how the trust evaluation plays out over time. The research aim was to fill that gap and to answer what explains differences in individuals' political trust and whether citizens' economic circumstances and cultural position can better explain differences in individuals’ political trust than procedural fairness and economic performance. This was guided by the following research questions:

To what extent can differences in individuals' cultural positions and economic situations explain differences in political trust in the Netherlands between 2008 and 2018?

In my theoretical framework, I delved into precarious work theory to provide a new framework for operationalizing individuals' economic relationships with the objects of political trust. This framework captures different aspects of individuals' economic situation than are ordinarily used in political trust literature, mainly including measures of economic insecurity. Additionally, I also examined the literature on cultural explanations for political behavior in my theoretical framework and discussed an application of these theories to political trust as an evaluation, namely that differences in political trust between individuals could be explained by which side of a status-based cultural conflict people find themselves. People with a lower cultural status were thought to evaluate the objects more negatively.

This was then used to formulate testable hypotheses on precariousness and political trust, and cultural capital in relation to political trust. Concerning precariousness, I hypothesized that respondents who grew more precarious over the time of this study would grow less trusting of the objects of political trust and vice versa. Concerning cultural capital, I hypothesized that respondents whose cultural status decreased would grow less trusting of the objects of political trust, meaning government, parliament, politicians and political parties. I expected that those who acquired more cultural capital and gained cultural status would have higher political trust as a result. I also included key variables from the trust as evaluation literature in my analysis as control variables to control for potential confounders and to see how they perform in a longitudinal analysis. These hypotheses were tested using various fixed effects models to examine how changes in LISS panels respondents' cultural and economic positions affected their political trust.

The findings suggest that while there is some relationship between individuals' cultural capital, precariousness and political trust, the results are mixed and mostly insignificant. The answer to the research question then is that an individual's cultural position and economic situation, as operationalized in this thesis, do not adequately explain differences in political trust in the Netherlands between 2008 and 2018. The findings suggest that precariousness explains some differences in political trust but not always in the way that was expected based on the theoretical framework. Someone's economic situation can explain some differences in political trust. However, more standard measures of economic performance such as an evaluation of the national economy, net income and GDP change are better at explaining differences in political trust than measures of economic insecurity. Changes in cultural capital as operationalized in this thesis did not play a significant role in explaining differences in political trust.

The results of this thesis make several contributions to the political trust literature as a whole. Corruption Perceptions Index is considered an important explanation for differences in political trust between countries in cross sectional studies comparing political trust across countries and between individuals (Hakhverdian & Mayne, 2012; Van der Meer & Zmerli, 2017). The findings of this thesis suggest that changes in Corruption Perceptions Index also successfully explain changes in political trust within individuals over time, even in a relatively low corruption country such as the Netherlands. These findings reaffirm how detrimental corruption is to trust in government and how important procedural fairness is. This merits a closer and broader look into the relationship between corruption and political trust. Maybe future research could look into this relationship more deeply by including not just the CPI but also related concepts such as lobbying and network corruption.

The results for the economic performance control variables in my analysis are not mixed like in many other studies (e.g., Chanley et al. 2000; Anderson & Singer, 2008; Dalton, 2004; Hakhverdian & Mayne, 2012). The findings suggest that economic performance at both the individual level and the macro level, and both using subjective and objective measures, explain a significant proportion of the changes in political trust within individuals. These findings are in line with earlier findings that examined economic explanation for political trust longitudinally (Kayser & Peress, 2012; Van Erkel & Van der Meer, 2016). What these findings contribute is the suggestion that economic performance is also important at the micro level. Citizens might not compare the state of the economy with those of other countries, as the cross-sectional designs yield mixed results, but do compare economic performance with past national performance. It would be interesting to see if these findings can be replicated in future research, analyzing other countries than the Netherlands and if these findings hold when examining political trust over time using models that also allow for time-invariant variables and between individual variance.

Based on the results of precariousness indicators, it seems that individuals do not necessarily attribute their personal economic situation to the government even if government policies are clearly implicated, such as the housing market. Skill level also has no significant relationship with changes in political trust. However, sufficiency of income and certain aspects of respondent's primary occupation, such as contract type, might affect political trust. Future research could look into whether precariousness is better at explaining differences between individuals than within individuals and whether precariousness interacts with other economic determinants that do seem to factor in individuals' evaluation of government more prominently, such as subjective evaluation of the national economy. Moreover, these findings might be different in other countries than the Netherlands. For now, it seems that while precariousness influences voting behavior and other forms of political participation, it does not affect political trust evaluations in LISS panel respondents.

The rejection of the cultural capital hypothesis contradicts the findings of Noordzij, Van der Waal & De Koster (2019). Cultural capital might have affected the evaluation of politicians in the

Netherlands in 2012; it does not affect changes in the political trust scale. However, we cannot outright reject their findings based on the analysis in this thesis. Future research, using data that allows for the operationalization of cosmopolitism as well as cultural participation, might yield different results than the analysis in this thesis. It would also be interesting to see if there is an interaction between the rhetoric of politicians on the low-status side of the cultural conflict and the relationship between an individual's cultural position and political trust. The increased salience of cultural issues and an increase in rhetoric that portrays the political establishment as a corrupt elite might very well lead to different results. At present, the results of this thesis suggest that while cultural explanations are important in explaining voter behavior and political apathy, they are not influencing individuals' political trust judgments significantly.

In conclusion, the findings suggest that the scientific literature on political trust as an evaluation not only has a good idea of what explains cross-sectional differences in political trust, but that these theories also hold up in a longitudinal study. Furthermore, it provides some potential new theoretical avenues in political trust research if adequate measures are available. Finally, for society in general, the results of this thesis paint a clear picture of what determines changes in political trust within Dutch citizens. This provides policymakers with an idea of where to start to improve the trust relationship between politics, political institutions, and its citizens.

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Appendix A. Factor analysis political trust

Table A.1: *Factor analysis political trust*

Item	*Factor loading*	*Uniqueness*
Confidence in Dutch government	0.779	0.161
Confidence in Dutch parliament	0.776	0.147
Confidence in politicians	0.526	0.158
Confidence in political parties	0.4893	0.189
Cronbach's alpha	0.942	

N = 6477

Source: *LISS panel Politics and values study (2008).*

Appendix B. Reliability analysis

Table B.1: *Reliability analysis of political trust in each*

Wave	Cronbach's alpha
1	0.942
2	0.9477
3	0.9512
4	0.919
5	0.945
6	0.945
7	0.954
8	0.954
9	0.953
10	0.955
11	0.957

Source: *LISS panel wave 1 -11 (2008-2019).*

Appendix C. Panel participation patterns

Table C.1 *Patterns in panel participation.*

Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative	
2338	10.25	10.25	11111111111
1945	8.53	18.78	11
1773	7.78	26.56	111........
988	4.33	30.89	11111......
881	3.86	34.76	.........1.
817	3.58	38.34	1111
730	3.20	41.54	11.........
726	3.18	44.73	1111.......
672	2.95	47.67	(other patterns)
11931	52.33	100.00	
22801	100.00		

Source: *LISS panel wave 1- 11 (2008-2019)*

Appendix D. Descriptive statistics working population

Table D.1: *Descriptive Statistics general sample*

	Valid N	*Min.*	*Max.*	*Mean / percentage*	*Standard Deviation*
Dependent Variable					
Political trust	34,278	0.00	10.00	5.17	1.84
Independent variables					
Sufficiency of Income	28,031	0.00	10.00	6.75	1.91
Job security	20,348	0.00	10.00	16.98	25.62
Occupation	32,398				
Unemployed	534	0.00	1.00	1.65%	
Solo self-employed/freelancer	3,170	0.00	1.00	8.73%	
On call	1,413	0.00	1.00	3.16%	
Temporary contract	1,030	0.00	1.00	2.47%	
Independent professional	488	0.00	1.00	1.33%	
Part-time employment	12,118	0.00	1.00	33.61%	
Full time employment (ref.)	17,764	0.00	1.00	49.06%	
Profession (Dummies)	32,398				
Manual worker (reference)	6,663	0.00	1.00	20.57%	
Non-manual lower	7,611	0.00	1.00	23.49	
Non-manual intermediate	12,5761	0.00	1.00	38.82%	
Non-manual higher	5,548	0.00	1.00	17.12%	
Housing (dummies)	19,957				
Other	292	0.00	1.00	1.46%	
Sub-tenant	103	0.00	1.00	0.52%	
Tenant	4,716	0.00	1.00	23.63%	
Owner (reference)	14,8460	0.00	1.00	74.39%	
Cultural capital	65,439	0	9	2.03	1.85
Control varriables					
Age	89,239	0	105	36.00	20.52
CPI	89,239	82	89	85.47	2.90
GDP-change	89,239	-3.70	2.90	0.99	1.90
Net Income	74,376	0	298535	1234.43	3723.57
Evaluation of national economy	30,527	0	10	5.50	1.66

Valid N (*Listwise*)	19,957

Source: *LISS panel wave 1 – 11 (2008-2019), Transparency International (2022), CBS (2022b)*

Appendix E. Multicollinearity checks

Table E.1: *VIF and Tolerance main sample*

Variables	VIF	tolerance
Sufficiency of income	1.28	0.78
Disabled from work	1.06	0.87
Unemployed	1.04	0.96
Solo self-employed	1.12	0.89
on call	1.03	0.97
Temporary contract	1.03	0.96
Independent professional	1.02	0.98
Part-time worker	1.36	0.74
Not working	2.21	0.45
Squatting & free housing	1.07	0.94
Sub-tenant	1.01	0.99
Cultural capital	1.72	0.58
Net Income	2.85	0.35
AGE	2.80	0.35
GDP change	1.25	0.80
CPI	1.16	0.87
Subjective evaluation of the national economy	1.04	0.96
Mean VIF	1.46	

Source: *LISS panel wave 1 – 11 (2008-2019), Transparency International (2022), CBS (2022b)*

Table E.2: *VIF and Tolerance worker's sample*

Variables	VIF	tolerance
Sufficiency of income	1.28	0.78
Job security	1.06	0.94
Squatting	1.01	0.99
Sub-letting	1.01	0.99
Tennant	1.07	0.94
Manual work	1.93	0.52
Non-manual lower	2.08	0.48
Non-manual intermediate	2.12	0.47
Solo self-employed	1.02	0.99
on call	1.09	0.92
Temporary contract	1.01	0.99
Independent professional	1.04	0.96
Part-time worker	1.03	0.97
Cultural capital	1.17	0.86
Net Income	1.18	0.85
AGE	1.06	0.94
GDP change	1.07	0.93
CPI	2.75	0.36
Subjective evaluation of the national economy	2.72	0.37
Mean VIF	1.25	

Source: *LISS panel wave 1 – 11 (2008-2019), Transparency International (2022), CBS (2022b)*