

This material is based on the IRB application (IRB22-1046) that was submitted to and approved by Harvard University. Please note that this is just a guideline to support collaborators' IRB applications. You are not required to use this material for your IRB application.

Remember that collaborators are responsible for making sure that they comply with their institutions' IRB process.

Research purpose

The goal of this project is to analyze the factors that affect trust in science, as well as the prevalence and predictors of science-related populist attitudes across countries. Specifically, we are interested in a) public opinion on the role of science in society and policymaking, b) the perceived goals and benefits of science, c) the ways individuals across the globe inform themselves and communicate about science, and d) climate change attitudes. The study will be conducted with the use of an online survey.

To obtain data from as many countries as possible, researchers can become co-authors in this study by fielding the survey in their own countries and funding the data collection process in their or other countries. All researchers have been informed that they must inform themselves whether they need to seek IRB approval.

Scientific background and rationale of the study

Scientific evidence is key for effective policy-making on global issues such as climate change and pandemics. The supply side model of science, whereby policymakers act on the knowledge provided by scientific experts, is based on trust in the scientific community to be accurate, transparent and act in the public interest in the production of knowledge and communication of research results (Hendriks et al. 2017). However, recent surveys have begun to document a decrease in public trust in science among some societal groups (Funk & Kennedy, 2020). At the same time, a majority of the public across countries calls for greater involvement of scientists in the policymaking process (Cologna et al., 2021). While overall trust in science in Western countries has remained stable over time (Funk & Kennedy, 2020), it is important to study trends of decreasing trust in science as well as emerging science-related populist attitudes (Mede & Schäfer, 2020) to better understand to what extent science-based policymaking is legitimized. Further, anti-science attitudes have been found to be strong in many countries in the global south, including countries in South America and Africa (Mede, 2022). Given that science-based policymaking in the global north directly and indirectly affects countries in the global south, it is important to understand why trust in science in the global south is consistently found to be lower than in the global north. Further, many international studies have only surveyed populations in WEIRD countries (Western, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic). Our international survey therefore makes an important contribution to the scientific literature by surveying populations in non-WEIRD countries and comparing responses across different global regions. There has been a recent increase in the frequency of Many Labs style collaborations (also called Big Team

Science projects) as they can help to overcome several obstacles of Small Team Science projects (e.g., generalizability, external validity).

Study procedure

Participants will first be made familiar with the content of the study and asked to provide consent for participation in this study. Participants will provide consent by ticking a box that they have read and understood the terms and conditions of participation and that they agree to participate in the study. For more information on the consent form, please check the consent form that I attached to this application.

Participants will then be asked to answer a series of questions on their opinion of science, scientists, and their perceptions of the role of science in policymaking. Participants will be given specific instructions on how to proceed throughout the survey. Completing this survey will take approximately 15 minutes. Please see the attached questionnaire for more information.

Risks

We do not expect risks of any kind to be associated with our study. The data will not allow identification of individual participants (no personally identifiable information will be collected).

Benefits to society

Higher trust in science predicts more pro-social behavior, so better understanding the determinants of trust could help to better understand how trust in science can be maintained and helpful behaviors potentially increased. Science-related populist attitudes pose a severe challenge to the status of science in society, as these attitudes deny the truthfulness of scientific knowledge and the legitimacy of scientists and academic institutions. Understanding the prevalence and predictors of science-related populist attitudes is essential for policymakers and science communicators to respond to this challenge.

Criteria for enrollment

Participants need to be at least 18 years old to be able to participate in this study.

Recruitment

In most countries, participants will be recruited through the market research company Bilendi & Respondi and their partners.

Screening

The research company Bilendi & Respondi will only recruit individuals 18 years or older. Further, we will set quotas for age and gender. Therefore, when quotas are full, some participants might no longer be able to participate in the study. We also included two attention checks. Participants will be redirected to the end of the survey if they fail these attention checks.