

# Trust in institutions in Greece amidst the COVID-19 era: ideological and existential parameters

George Tsouvelas<sup>a, b</sup>, Efthalia Massou<sup>b, c</sup>, Gerasimos Prodromitis<sup>b, d</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Speech and Language Therapy, University of Patras, Greece.

ORCID ID: **0000-0001-8123-0091**; E-mail address: [tsouvelasgiorgos@gmail.com](mailto:tsouvelasgiorgos@gmail.com)

<sup>b</sup>Laboratory of Experimental and Social Psychology, Department of Psychology, Panteion University, Athens, Greece.

<sup>c</sup>Primary Care Unit, Department of Public Health and Primary Care, School of Clinical Medicine, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK.

ORCID ID: **0000-0003-0488-482X**; E-mail address: [em716@medschl.cam.ac.uk](mailto:em716@medschl.cam.ac.uk)

<sup>d</sup>Department of Psychology, Panteion University, Athens, Greece

ORCID ID: **0000-0001-6945-2628**; E-mail address: [gprod@panteion.gr](mailto:gprod@panteion.gr)

## Abstract

COVID-19 pandemic brought us face to face with existential threats, a sense of insecurity and ideological challenges. Trust in institutions is a key issue for compliance with the measures and restrictions we were called upon to follow during the pandemic. Our studies explored with a mixed-methods approach the role of ideological and existential parameters in trust in institutions during COVID-19 pandemic. Students from several departments of National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and University of West Attica participated in our studies (219 in study 1 and 166 in study 2). Study 1, through a correlational and repeated cross-sectional survey explored the relationship of political orientation on trust in institutions in college students during the 1<sup>st</sup> (June-July 2020) and 3<sup>rd</sup> (November-December 2021) wave of pandemic. Participants in 3<sup>rd</sup> wave reported statistically significant lower scores on trust on Prime Minister, Government, Doctor and Nurses and National Health System during 3<sup>rd</sup> wave of pandemic in comparison to 1<sup>st</sup> wave. In both waves, right political orientation was correlated with strong trust in Prime Minister, Government, Greek Army, Church and Greek Police. Study 2, through a quasi-experimental and correlational design, explored the role of ideological and existential parameters in trust in institutions during the second wave of the pandemic (February–April 2021). Exposure to mortality salience was introduced in the experimental group by administering the Mortality Attitudes Personality Survey, while participants of the control group responded to a questionnaire about TV watching. Measures for both groups included the Social Dominance Orientation, the Right-Wing Authoritarianism, the Global Belief in a Just World, the Connection of the Soul Scale and a questionnaire included 16 domains of trust. Five factors were explicitly extracted in the Exploratory Factor Analysis (Political institutions, Health/Law institutions/Law, Local authorities, Executive institutions, Established order). Participants in mortality salience condition presented higher support in the Health/Law institutions. Mortality salience moderated the relationship between Social Dominance Orientation and trust in institutions. Predictive indicators of institutional trust emerged the post mortem expectations for connection with God and belief in a just world. Policy-making implications of these findings are discussed.

## Key words

Institutional trust; Terror management theory; right-wing authoritarianism; belief in just world; post mortem expectations; COVID-19

**Corresponding author:** George Tsouvelas [tsouvelasgiorgos@gmail.com](mailto:tsouvelasgiorgos@gmail.com)

## Introduction

### Trust in institutions

Trust in institutions is an important component of democratic societies, as it is essential for smooth interactions between the institutions of a country and its citizens. It depends on individuals' experiences in relevant settings (e.g. educational settings, work) [1], it is influenced by institution's performance in particular domains [2] and it can be discerned as trust in institutions that implement public policies and trust in institutions that might represent individual's ideology or interests [3]. There are different approaches on how trust in institutions is measured, including unidimensional (global trust) [4] and multidimensional measures (e.g. trust in national government, army or justice system) [5]. Through this study we explore trust in institutions in both ways.

Greece, a country with traditionally low trust in institutions [6], is an interesting setting to measure trust since the country had been experiencing a harsh socio-economic crisis 10 years before the pandemic. According to Daskalopoulou [7], after three economic adjustment programmes, trust in Greece had declined significantly with higher decrease to be found in trust in political and impartial institutions [8-9]. In addition to low trust, Daskalopoulou [10] found low satisfaction with democracy. But even before the unfolding of the circumstances of the economic crisis, the levels of public trust in political and impartial institutions (i.e. the police and legal system) were found also low (Ervasti et al. [8]; using data from (e.g., 2002 to 2011).

It's not only the economic crises that interact with trust in institutions and put it under stress. Public health crises, like pandemics, have also a strong relationship with trust in institutions in many ways. Recent research exploring the trust during the pandemic at European level has yielded contradictory results; an explanation of which might be the different approaches in pandemic's management followed by the countries. In a study in the UK [11] there was a decrease in trust while in France [12] and Italy [13] there was an increase in trust in institutions ('rally-round-the-flag' effect). However, as suggested by Kritzinger et al. [12] rally effect should be understood as a short-term reaction to an immediate threat that motivates supporters of the opposition to lend support to the government for a limited amount of time. However according to rally effect is expected the government will lose support over time due to the declining levels of perceived threat and supporters of the opposition returning to their normal critical assessment of the government. Low levels of trust in institutions also reported in a study in USA [14] where, only slightly more than half of the respondents in our sample indicating they trusted the government or their neighbors to "do the right thing to get us through the crisis." As suggested by Devine et al. [15] during COVID-19, mortality was inversely correlated with trust in institutions and effectiveness in countries and communities across the spectrum of poorer to wealthier nations.

A public opinion survey conducting in Greece during the first months of the pandemic found that trust in judiciary,

church, political parties decreased between January 2018 and April 2020, while trust in armed forces, police, Prime Minister, Mayor, government, regional governor, members of Parliament increased within the same period [16]. According to a recent study on trust in institutions, Greece is almost in the middle of the distribution compared to other European countries [17].

Next, we will refer to the connection of trust in institutions with ideological and existential parameters.

### Ideology and trust in institutions

In the present study we explore how ideological constructs, such as political orientation, social dominance orientation, right-wing authoritarianism and belief in a just world are generally related to trust in institutions (e.g. global trust and domain-specific trust), in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Greece. According to Jost et al. [18-19] the classic left-right political orientation belief system can be expressed through two dimensions a) advocating or resisting social change and b) rejecting or accepting inequality (or hierarchy). During COVID-19, political orientations and trust in institutions correlated with attitudes about containment measures during COVID-19 pandemic [20].

According to system justification theory [21], people are generally motivated to endorse ideologies that reinforce the status quo, but doing so involves a complex process of balancing needs for self, group and system justification. Three measures of individual differences in these motivations are Social Dominance Orientation (SDO: [22]) and Right-wing Authoritarianism (RWA: [23]) and Belief in a Just World (BJW: [24]).

The ideological aspects of conservatism were based on the theoretical framework of Duckitt and Sibley [25-26] where SDO and RWA, are basic dimensions of ideological beliefs within the dual process motivational approach to ideological attitudes. People with high scores in SDO perceive the world as a jungle and value ingroup dominance, power and superiority. On the other hand, those having high scores in RWA perceive the world as a threatening place and value societal security, order and stability [27]. Furthermore, SDO is defined as a competition-driven attitudinal expression of the values or motivational goals of power, dominance, and superiority and RWA is defined as a threat-driven attitudinal expression of the values or motivational goals of collective security, control, stability, and order [25].

In addition, people with high scores in SDO are expected to be less open to persuasion on the basis of scientific facts and this has an impact on trust in health-related institutions [28]. As the institutions are societal structures of authority and stability, as well as power and dominance we expect that trust in institutions will be associated with RWA and SDO. Moreover it was expected that SDO will be related with more trust Executive institutions (e.g. Government, Civil protection) and RWA with trust of Established order (e.g. Police, Army, Church).

BJW states that people tend to believe that they live in a just world, in which everyone gets what they deserve, and physical and social environments around them are stable and orderly [29]. BJW is an ideological concept that is very close to concepts of existential worldview and it goes beyond the bi-

polar conservatism of progressiveness. BJW is associated with trust [30-31] and trust in institutions [32-33]. As suggested by Zhang and Zhang [33] individuals with higher trust in institutions often strongly believe that the world around them is just and BJW serves as a bridge linking trust in institutions to life satisfaction. Therefore, in the face of stressful events such as the coronavirus pandemic, the BJW may promote a sense of trust in institutions and a stable perception of the environment. We expect that BJW would be a robust predictor of global trust in institutions.

### Existential parameters explain trust in institutions

Terror management theory (TMT) is a study field of experimental existential psychology. Its basic assumption is that personal death causes a sense of threat and uncertainty in the ontological security of the individual [34-35], which has been predominant in the era of the pandemic. In such contexts of death-related uncertainties, people try to manage the awareness of the inevitability of death. They do so in various ways, for example through myths, religion, science and medicine as well as through family and work [36], topics that have been highly debated in the era of the pandemic. According to TMT people create and maintain cultural systems of meaning and values in order to minimize the distress and anxiety related to death and instill hope through beliefs about immortality. We tend to seek security through explicit (post-mortem expectations) and implicit/symbolic immortality (cultural worldviews). The attachment to cultural values and institutions enables individuals to construe themselves as valuable, memorable contributors to larger entities that continue to exist after their death, such as family, communities or nations [37]. The notion that explicit and symbolic immortality contribute to the alleviation of existential anxiety has received considerable empirical support [38]. Attachment to symbolic immortality was found to be negatively related to fear of death and defense after exposure to mortality salience [39]. Terror management theory poses that exposure to mortality salience increases dependency on internalized cultural worldviews and preference for those who support these worldviews.

As suggested by Pyszczynski et al. [40] the salience of death brought on by COVID-19 plays a central role in driving the attitudes and behavior of even those who believe that the dangers of the virus have been vastly exaggerated. Regardless of how contagious and lethal the virus is, the possibility of dying from it is highly salient and evident in ever-increasing death toll statistics, vivid images of overburdened hospitals and makeshift morgues, and the testimonials to victims of the virus, both famous and unknown [40].

During the development of the TMT, two different hypotheses have been formulated based on the fact that the mortality salience promotes: a) worldview defense and b) conservative shift [41]. According to the worldview defense hypothesis, mortality salience leads people to cling to their preexisting worldview (adherence to one's pre-existing worldview) [42], while according to the conservative shift hypothesis [18], mortality salience elicits a general shift toward more conservative values, attitudes and preferences.

### Rationale and Contribution of the Present Study

To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study that investigates the role of ideological and existential parameters on trust in institutions. Few studies have linked trust in institutions with conservatism and ideology such as authoritarianism [43-45], which has been proved to be a slightly better predictor of trust in institutions than social dominance orientation [46].

The conceptualization when analyzing trust, and its determinants, needs to be framed in the context of a specific phenomenon [1]. The context of the study 1 was the first (June-July 2020) and the third wave (November-December 2021) of COVID-19. In the study 1 we explore the differences in the level of trust in institutions and the correlation of political orientation at two time points. Given that Greece during all the COVID-19 pandemic had a conservative government in Greece, we expected that right-wing political orientation would be related to trust in government and executive power as well as support for traditional conservative institutions (church, police, army).

The study 2 was conducted during the second lockdown of the pandemic. According to Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker (OxCGRT) about lockdown policies, restrictions in Greece were among the strictest not only in Europe but also the entire world. The aim of the study 2 was to explore the impact of ideological and existential parameters on trust in institutions by implementing a quasi-experimental and correlational design that uses a sample of college students. Specifically, we examined the impact of mortality salience on a series of ideological factors and on global trust in institutions. Through the study 2 we want to investigate what will be the effect of existential factors (mortality salience) on the relationship between two distinct dimensions: conservatism and trust in institutions. The theoretical background for investigating the hypotheses of conservative shift and worldview defense [41] was based on the model of Duckitt and Sibley [25]. In the study 1 we capture the relationship between trust in institutions and ideology, evaluating it in a rough way (political orientation left right). In the study 2 we further explore the relationship between ideology, as expressed through RWA and the SDO, and trust and at the same time we evaluate how it differs following exposure to an existential threat.

Subsequently, we examine the impact of existential parameters, either as a condition (exposure to mortality salience) or as a predisposition (post-mortem expectations) and ideological factors (SDO, RWA, BJW) on trust in institutions. Existential anxiety is included as a condition (exposure to mortality salience) as well as a predisposition (post-mortem expectations) in line with Terror Management Theory. This approach contributes to the relevant literature since the above-mentioned distinction has been investigated only limited.

## Study 1

### Methods

#### Participants

Two hundred nineteen (219) Greek students at various departments in National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

and the University of West Attica participated in the study. After plausibility testing with anomaly index no unidentified usual cases were observed. A Google Form questionnaire was distributed with a convenience and snowball sampling procedure. Participants, recruited through Universities' social networking sites, were asked to use their own contacts and recruit others. Out of the 219 participants, 159 (72.6%) were female while the mean age of the sample was 25.9 years (SD = 8.9 years).

### Measurements

**Trust in Institutions.** We measured trust using a scale ranging from not at all (1) to the highest level of trust (7). In particular, items were selected from the public trust scale [47] that assessed trust in institutions. The exact wording of the question was "How much trust you would say that you have in each one of the following institutions, based on their role in the management of the pandemic?" including the: municipality authorities, county, government, Prime Minister, political parties, Greek Parliament, National Health System (ESY), doctors and nurses, Greek Judiciary, Greek Army, public sector, Greek Police, civil protection, politicians, Church, World Health Organisation (WHO).

**Political orientation.** Participants were asked to place themselves within the political spectrum extremely left–extremely right using a scale from 1 (extremely left) to 10 (extremely right) [48]. Two additional options, "Don't know" and "Don't answer" were available for participants who could not find a representative point on the scale.

### Procedure

Data collection was carried out on-line during the first wave (June-July 2020) and the third wave of pandemic (November-December 2021). The study 1 was a cross-sectional correlational design with measurements in two different timepoints.

### Ethical Statement

The first page of the questionnaires (study 1 and 2) provided information about the study purposes and administration, as well as about data security and data use. A consent statement was requested at the end of this information to allow access to the main questionnaire. Data collection took place after informed consent was granted. Participation was voluntary and no reward was offered. During the period of planning and implementing the study, neither an ethics committee nor other relevant procedures for conducting a study was established in the host organization. The research team followed the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments.

### Results

#### Differences between timepoints in demographic factors and political orientation

Regarding timepoint measurements, participants did not differentiate in gender  $\chi^2(1)=0.01, p = .925$ , age  $t(217)=-0.23, p = .822$  and political orientation  $t(149)= -0.54, p = .593$ .

### Descriptive statistics in items

The highest scores of trust in institutions were attributed to Doctors/Nurses, WHO, National Health System (ESY) and Greek Army. Differentiations in trust in institutions with the lowest averages were detected between the two timepoints. At the first wave, the lowest trust was in the Greek Parliament, Church and Politicians while at the third wave the lowest trust was in the Government, the Prime Minister and Politicians (see Table 1).

#### Differences between timepoints measurements in Trust in institutions

Participants in timepoint 2 reported statistically significant lower scores of trust in Prime Minister, Government, Doctor and Nurses and National Health System compared to timepoint 1 (see Table 1).

**Table 1. Differences in items of trust in institutions between timepoints**

	Timepoint 1 (n=105) June-July 2020		Timepoint 2 (n=114) November- December 2021		t	d
	M	SD	M	SD		
Greek Parliament	2.50	1.45	2.35	1.41	0.80	0.105
Politicians	2.17	1.35	1.97	1.16	1.16	0.159
Public sector	3.10	1.55	3.04	1.46	0.30	0.040
Doctors/ Nurses	5.50	1.37	5.04	1.40	2.40*	0.332
National Health System (ESY)	4.01	1.64	3.41	1.59	2.74**	0.372
WHO	4.36	1.56	4.05	1.82	1.35	0.183
Greek Judiciary	3.32	1.61	3.15	1.70	0.78	0.103
Regional authorities	3.07	1.60	3.15	1.37	-0.41	-0.054
Municipality authorities	3.12	1.52	3.38	1.52	-1.23	-0.171
Prime Minister	2.86	1.85	2.31	1.82	2.22*	0.300
Government	3.08	1.79	2.33	1.57	3.25***	0.446
Greek Army	3.40	1.98	3.63	1.91	-0.88	-0.118
Church	2.22	1.68	2.61	1.84	-1.66	-0.222
Greek Police	3.03	1.89	3.01	1.74	0.08	0.011

Note \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001; d = Cohen's d effect size.

#### Relationship between political orientation and trust in institutions

Right political orientation was correlated with strong trust in Prime Minister, Government, Greek Army, Church and Greek

Police, regardless of the timepoint. At Timepoint 2 we also observed significant correlation between right political orientation and Greek Parliament and National Health System (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Correlation of right political orientation with trust in institutions during two timepoints measurements**

	Political orientation	
	T1	T2
Pearson r		
Greek Parliament	.12	.32**
Politicians	.16	.14
Public sector	-.25*	.22
Doctors/Nurses	-.16	-.03
National Health System (ESY)	.09	.36**
WHO	.08	.09
Greek Judiciary	.22	.19
Regional authorities	.30**	.22
Municipality authorities	.14	.21
Prime Minister	.41***	.59***
Government	.41***	.52***
Greek Army	.43***	.52***
Church	.53***	.53***
Greek Police	.46***	.65***

Note \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

## Study 2

### Methods

#### Participants

A hundred seventy four (174) Greek students at various departments in National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and the University of West Attica participated in the study. The recruitment process was the same with that described for study 1. The plausibility testing led to the final sample that included 166 participants. Out of the 166 participants, 138 (83.1%) were female while the mean age of that sample was 23.3 years ( $SD = 7.07$  years). Participants were randomly assigned to the mortality salience condition ( $n = 89$ , 53.6%) and the control condition ( $n = 77$ , 46.4%) (see Table 3). The two groups did not differ significantly in terms of gender, ideological parameters (SDO, RWA, BJW) and postmortem expectations. The sample size meets the general rule of thumb, according to which in order to detect reasonable-size effects with reasonable power, 10-20 observations per parameter (covariate) estimated are needed.

### Measurements

**Mortality salience.** The Mortality Attitudes Personality Survey [49] was administered in the mortality salience condition. Participants were asked prototypical open-ended questions regarding their mortality: "Please briefly describe the thoughts and emotions that follow the idea of your own physical death" and "Write down in detail what you think will happen to you as you die and once you are physically dead" [49]. For the control condition, participants responded to two questions about TV watching and web TV programs. This is a commonly used manipulation for control groups in experimental designs of Terror Management Theory [50].

**Delay condition.** To provide a further distraction between the mortality salience exposure and the dependent measures, participants read a literary excerpt about the plasticity of the language. Then they were asked to guess the author's gender and create four words by using specific letters from the text. The delay was 10-12 minutes duration. The length of the delay, combined with the assignment of simple cognitive tasks, is supposed to increase the mortality salience effect even further [50].

**Social dominance orientation (SDO).** The SDO scale consisted of 16-item developed by Pratto et al. [22]. Example items include "Some groups of people are just more worthy than others," and "It would be good if all groups could be equal" (reverse-coded). Participants responded on a 7-point scale (1=strongly disagree 7=strongly agree), and their scores were averaged to form an SDO index. Higher scores on the scale mean higher acceptance of social dominance on groups. The internal consistency was high (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.88$ ).

**Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA).** The RWA scale consisted of the 15 item ([23] as adapted by Zakrisson [51]). The response scale ranged from 1 (very negative) to 7 (very positive), with higher scores meaning higher acceptance of right-wing conservative ideology. The scale had acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.77$ ).

**Global Belief in a Just World (BJW).** The BJW scale consists of 7 items that tap a general belief in the world as just (e.g., "I feel that people get what they deserve") [24]. Participants were asked to express the degree of their agreement with each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale anchored from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Internal consistency was high (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.86$ ).

**Trust in Institutions.** The public trust scale [47] was used, as in study 1, with the addition of one more item about trust in civil protection.

**Post-mortem expectations.** The Connection of Soul scale, which measures postmortem expectations (PME), was administered [52] for this study. The scale included 12 items summarized in three dimensions: secular (4 items, e.g. "Regarding my life, after death everything is over"), God-centered (4 items, e.g. "After death I come to the community with God") and cosmic-spiritual views (4 items, e.g. "After death my soul connects with the world spirit or the infinite force"). Participants assessed their level of agreement on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree"). Internal consistency was high (secular views:  $\alpha = 0.94$ ; God-centered views:  $\alpha = 0.89$ ; and cosmic-spiritual views:  $\alpha = 0.87$ ).

## Demographics

Participants filled in a demographic questionnaire their gender, age, department of the university, health self-evaluation and if they belong to any of the epidemiologically vulnerable groups (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Demographics of the sample (N=166)**

	N	%	
Gender			
Male	28	16.9	
Female	138	83.1	
Vulnerable population			
Yes	21	12.7	
No	145	87.3	
Monthly income (€)			
Less than 500€	59	35.5	
501 - 1.000€	31	18.7	
1.001 - 1.500€	9	5.4	
More than 1.501€	8	4.8	
Don't know/ don't answer	59	35.5	
	Range	M	SD
Age	18-52	23.30	7.05
Self evaluation of health status	1-7	5.67	1.15

## Procedure

All measures were adapted to Greek from their original English versions by two bilingual researchers following back translation procedures [53]. Data collection was carried out on-line during the second lockdown in Greece (February –April 2021). Our study is a quasi-experimental and correlational design. The order in which the questionnaires were administered was as follows: SDO, RWA, BJW, Mortality salience manipulation, Delay condition, Trust in institutions and PME. Questionnaire completion time did not exceed 35 minutes.

## Results

### Exploratory Factor Analysis

To explore the factorial structure of trust in institutions we conducted an exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation using the original 16 items. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis,  $KMO = 0.90$ . Bartlett's test of sphericity  $\chi^2(120) = 1754.12, p < .001$ , indicating that correlation structure is adequate for factor analyses. The maximum likelihood factor analysis with a cut-off point of 0.45 and the Kaiser's criterion of eigenvalues greater than 1 [54] yielded a five-factor solution as the best fit for the data, accounting for 67.4% of the variance. The results of this factor analysis are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Results from the Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Trust in institutions items**

Trust in institutions	Factor loadings				
	Political institutions	Health institutions / Law	Local authorities	Executive institutions	Established order
Political parties	0.83	0.09	0.15	0.22	0.08
Greek Parliament	<b>0.74</b>	0.26	0.29	0.25	0.16
Politicians	<b>0.70</b>	0.22	0.23	0.23	0.23
Public sector	<b>0.50</b>	0.24	0.26	0.08	0.23
Doctors/ Nurses	0.12	<b>0.75</b>	0.00	0.02	0.20
National Health System (ESY)	0.31	<b>0.59</b>	0.30	0.33	0.08
WHO	0.09	<b>0.58</b>	0.07	0.16	0.12
Greek Judiciary	0.29	<b>0.51</b>	0.32	0.08	0.38
Regional authorities	0.32	0.12	<b>0.72</b>	0.21	0.28
Municipality authorities	0.30	0.11	<b>0.71</b>	0.23	0.21
Prime Minister	0.33	0.21	0.21	<b>0.85</b>	0.21
Government	0.44	0.21	0.36	<b>0.65</b>	0.29
Civil protection	0.31	0.43	0.40	<b>0.45</b>	0.25
Greek Army	0.13	0.20	0.12	0.16	<b>0.76</b>
Church	0.21	0.19	0.36	0.12	<b>0.60</b>
Greek Police	0.23	0.39	0.24	0.27	<b>0.51</b>
M	2.31	4.17	3.14	2.46	2.93
SD	0.97	1.12	1.25	1.27	1.44
Cronbach's $\alpha$	0.87	0.87	0.85	0.91	0.80

Note.  $N=166$ . The extraction method was Maximum Likelihood. Rotation method is Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Factor loadings above 0.45 are in bold.

### Descriptive statistics in items and factors of trust in institutions

The highest scores of trust in institutions were attributed to Doctors/Nurses, WHO and National Health System (ESY); while the lowest to Prime Minister, Political parties and Politicians. When considering the factorial structure, trust in Health institutions / Law presented the highest score and trust in Political institutions the lowest score (see Table 5).

**Table 5. Descriptive statistics of trust in institutions items (range 1-7)**

Trust in:	M	SD
Doctors/ Nurses	5.27	1.23
WHO	4.38	1.52
National Health System (ESY)	3.68	1.55
Greek Army	3.37	1.76
Greek Judiciary	3.36	1.45
Municipality authorities	3.27	1.39
Regional authorities	3.01	1.30
Civil protection	3.00	1.50
Public sector	2.91	1.27
Church	2.72	1.74
Greek Police	2.69	1.58
Greek Parliament	2.26	1.18
Government	2.25	1.29
Prime Minister	2.14	1.35
Political parties	2.10	1.12
Politicians	1.98	1.02

**Differences between experimental (mortality salience) and control group**

Participants of the experimental group reported significantly higher scores in the factor of trust in Health institutions / Law in comparison to participants of the control group (see Table 6).

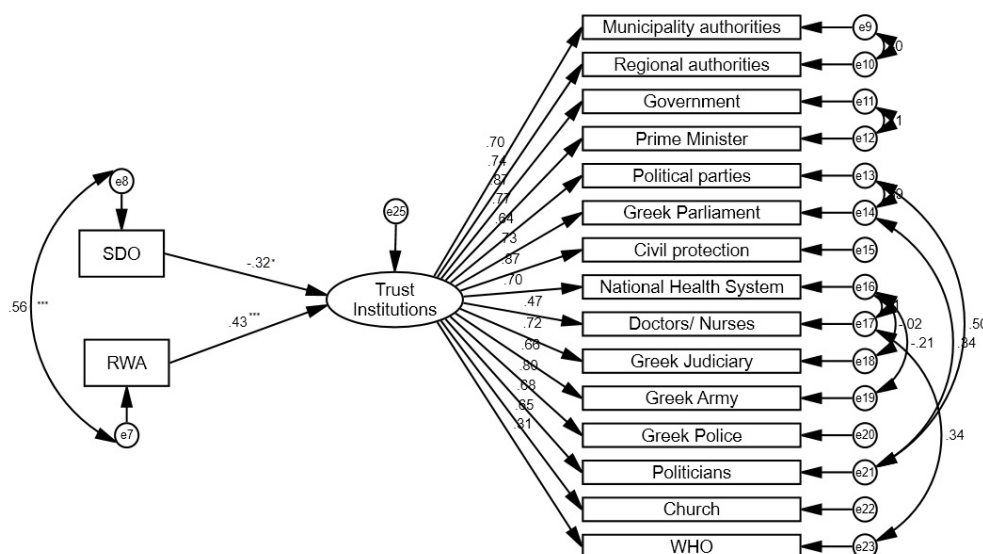
**Table 6. Differences in factors of trust in institutions between experimental and control group**

	Experimental (n=89)		Control (n=77)		t	d
	M	SD	M	SD		
Political institutions	2.35	0.95	2.27	1.00	0.54	0.08
Health institutions / Law	4.35	1.02	3.97	1.19	2.22*	0.34
Local authorities	3.27	1.32	2.99	1.16	1.40	0.23
Executive institutions	2.58	1.34	2.32	1.18	1.36	0.21
Established order	2.95	1.48	2.90	1.40	0.18	0.03

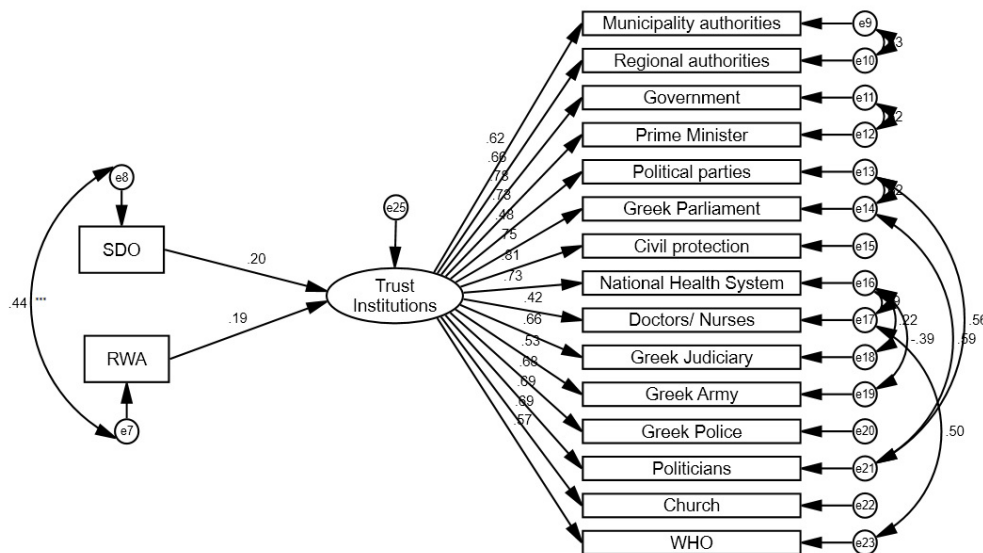
Note \* p < .05.

**Moderation of mortality salience on the relationship between conservatism and trust**

A latent variable of trust was created in order to test the moderation of experimental manipulation (experimental vs control group) on the relationship between SDO and RWA on global trust in institutions. The model demonstrated acceptable model fit ( $CMIN = 394.87, df = 218, p < .001, CMIN/df = 1.82, CFI = 0.90, TLI = 0.88, IFI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.07$  [LO=0.06 HI = 0.08]). Experimental’s manipulation moderation was not statistically significant  $\Delta\chi^2(16)=22.07, p = .141$ , suggesting that groups are not different at the model level. Based on differences on slope tests, statistically significant differences in experimental manipulation were observed on the path from SDO to trust  $t(10) = 3.25, p = .009$ . A pattern of positive relationship between SDO and trust in institutions in mortality salience condition was also detected, while the relationship was inversed in control condition. Furthermore, while it was not statistically significant, a pattern of no relationship between RWA and trust in institutions in mortality salience and positive relationship in the control group was found. The standardized path coefficients (beta) can be seen in Figure 1 and 2.



**Figure 1. Prediction of trust by RWA and SDO in the experimental group**



**Figure 2.** Prediction of trust by RWA and SDO in the control group

**Note:** CMIN = 394.87, df = 218, p < .001 CMIN / df = 1.81, CFI = 0.90, TLI = 0.88, IFI = 0.90, RMSEA = 0.07 (LO=0.06 HI = 0.08).

### Statistical prediction of Trust in institutions by ideological and existential parameters

A series of multiple regression analyses (using stepwise method) were performed in order to investigate whether belief in a Just World, Social Dominance Orientation, Right Wing Authoritarianism, Post Mortem Expectations (Secular, God-centered, Cosmic-centered) and Experimental manipulation predict factors of trust in institutions (see Table 7).

Trust in political institutions was significantly affected by belief in a Just World and God-centered postmortem expectations, even though the magnitude of the effect was not very strong.

God-centered post mortem expectations, mortality salience showing higher scores and Social dominance orientation were significant predictors of trust in health institutions / Law. Trust in local authorities was significantly associated with God-centered post mortem expectations and belief in a Just World; whereas trust in executive institutions was associated by God-centered post mortem expectations and belief in a Just World. Trust in established order was highly affected by God-centered post mortem expectations, RWA, secular postmortem expectations and BJW. God-centered post mortem expectations and BJW had significant impact on global trust as it is seen in Table 7.

**Table 7. Multiple regression analysis for predicting factors of trust in institutions by BJW, SDO, RWA, Postmortem expectations and experimental manipulation**

	Political institutions		Health institutions / Law		Local authorities		Executive institutions		Established order		Global trust	
	Final step (ΔR <sup>2</sup> )	β	Final step (ΔR <sup>2</sup> )	β	Final step (ΔR <sup>2</sup> )	β	Final step (ΔR <sup>2</sup> )	β	Final step (ΔR <sup>2</sup> )	β	Final step (ΔR <sup>2</sup> )	β
BJW	1(0.11)	0.25**	2(0.03)	0.21**	2(0.06)	0.26***	2(0.05)	0.24***	4(0.02)	0.14*	2(0.06)	0.27***
SDO			4(0.02)	-0.16*								
RWA									2(0.05)	0.19**		
PME Secular									3(0.03)	-0.19**		
PME God-centered	2(0.03)	0.20*	1(0.16)	0.32***	1(0.14)	0.27***	1(0.16)	0.31***	1(0.35)	0.37***	1(0.26)	0.41***
PME Cosmic-centered												
Experimental manipulation			3(0.03)	0.17*								
R <sup>2</sup>	0.14		0.24		0.19		0.21		0.45		0.33	
F <sup>2</sup>	0.16		0.32		0.23		0.27		0.82		0.49	

Note \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001. BJW = Belief in a Just World, SDO = Social dominance orientation, RWA = Right wing authoritarianism, PME = Post Mortem Expectations. For experimental manipulation 0 = control group, 1 = experimental group (mortality salience)



## Discussion

In this study we investigated the effect of ideological and existential parameters on trust in institutions during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic using samples of college students. Students reported higher trust in doctors, WHO and the National Health System. Similar findings can be found in studies in Slovakia [55], in Italy [56] and in Greece [47]. Our finding regarding high levels of trust in science in Greece is in line with the finding reported by Giovanetti et al. [57] and Pagliaro et al. [17]. The Government, the Prime Minister, the Political parties and the Politicians were the institutions with the lowest levels of trust. These findings are in line with a UK study [11] which reported decreased trust in government considering a similar time period as timepoint 1 in our case.

Regarding differences between the two timepoints (June-July 2020 vs November-December 2021), we found that participants during the third wave of the pandemic reported lower trust in the Prime Minister, Government, Doctor and Nurses and National Health System. The management of the pandemic appears to have had a major impact on both citizens' trust in health (although trust continues to have highest trust in comparison with other institutions) and trust in government. A decrease in trust in institutions for the period February 2020 to June 2020 was recorded in Poland, Germany, Slovenia, and Israel [58-59].

Our hypothesis that right-wing political orientation would be positively linked with the executive and conservative institutions, was confirmed. Furthermore, observed correlations were stronger using measurements of the third pandemic wave.

Although the factorial structure of the scale of trust in institutions has shown very clear factor structure and satisfactorily high loadings, the inclusion of the item about belief in justice in a factor that is mostly a health-related one, may be interpreted as a response to the corona virus's existential threat as a worldview defense regardless of experimental manipulation. Belief in the institutions of health and justice may express confidence in institutions that are considered in Greece more impartial and less corrupt.

Regarding the experimental manipulation, the hypothesis of a conservative shift [18] was confirmed neither in the factors (e.g. Executive institutions, Established order) nor in the global index of trust. It was observed higher levels of trust in health/justice factor in the experimental group. We will interpret our findings mainly in the context of the worldview defense [60] or control motivation [61] that is related to the pandemic. As the existential threat emerged (mortality salience), it led the participants to defend their worldview since the management to the pandemic was expected to come through science and medicine. Therefore, participants who exposed to mortality salience (experimental group) presented higher trust in the factor of Health institutions / Law.

By examining the moderating effect of mortality salience on the relationship between two different aspects of conservatism, the picture is even more complex. The exposure to mortality salience differentiates the relationship between SDO and trust in institutions; for the participants in the experimental condition we found negative direction of the effect

of SDO and trust in institutions, while in the control group having a positive correlation. Possibly individuals high in SDO differ in their response to trust in institutions when faced with existential anxiety.

Strong predictive indicators for predicting trust and its dimensions were the postmortem expectations for union with God and belief in a just world. Given the threat posed by the pandemic, it seems that strong predictors are associated with existential rather than ideological parameters. Postmortem expectation for union with God is considered as a latent measurement of religiosity and belief in a just world as a worldview orientation beyond the bipolar conservatism and progressiveness.

However, other related studies have highlighted the greater contribution of ideological parameters versus existential orientations. According to Azevedo and Jost [28] the operational endorsement of politically conservative ideology was the dominant predictor of attitudes toward science and other factors, including partisanship and religiosity were less important, in comparison with ideology.

Regarding three post-mortem worldviews, the union with the God is a latent measure of the religiosity of the prevailing religion in Greece (Orthodox Christianity), the union with the universe (Cosmic-centered) was a latent measure of a "New Age" orientation and secular post-mortem orientation, as a latent measure of atheism/ not trust in dominant religions [52]. Our findings were similar with those of Devos et al. [43] who pointed out that religious individuals motivated to preserve traditions, the status quo, and certainty in relationships with others—values with a strong affinity to trust in institutions.

Existential parameters as state (mortality salience) seemed to predict only trust in health/justice while existential parameters as trait (post mortem expectations) seemed to predict all trust in institutions factors. Stronger predictive effect of existential parameters as trait (post-mortem expectations) compared to state (mortality salience), can be found, also in the study regarding host acculturation expectations [62]. Moreover, while the relationship between religion and ideology is well-established through cross-cultural studies [63], religion orientation was not expected to be a stronger predictor of trust in institutions than ideology.

Trust in health/law institutions was predicted inversely by SDO. People who score high on SDO, as expected, were less open to persuasion on the basis of scientific facts, all other things being equal [64]. Presumably, this is because the assumption that "might make right," which undergirds the ideology of the high SDO individual is fundamentally antidemocratic [23]. Trust in established order, as expected, was predicted positively by RWA. Considering the findings regarding the positive prediction of RWA to trust in established order and the negative prediction of SDO to trust in health/law institutions capture two different images of conservatism. The above finding may reflect pandemic populism during lockdown that have pushed further the mobilization of the far right [65-66]. However, our results present a fairly weak relationship between RWA and SDO with trust in institutions are supported by previous findings before [67] and during pandemic [68].

Finally, trust in established order was predicted by God-centered post mortem expectations and inversely by secular post mortem expectations. The findings were expected as the God-centered expresses a latent aspect of religiosity while the Secular lack of belief in prevailing religions / atheism. However a more secular worldview may be associated with the rejection of traditional conservative forces of enforcement and repression against legitimizing myths of maintaining the status quo.

## Limitations

A number of limitations should be acknowledged. Our study (study 1) was a repeated cross-sectional survey. Future longitudinal studies should be conducted to examine the evolution of the same participants across more than two consecutive timepoints and examine causal relationships between the variables. To our knowledge, this is the first study (study 2) that empirically investigates the impact of existential and ideological parameters on trust in institutions. Undoubtedly, more studies are necessary to validate our findings. It is not only the non-representative sampling procedures that limit generalizability, but also the context-bound nature of our conclusions, especially in the rapidly changing landscape of pandemic COVID-19. As suggested by Devos et al. [43], interpretations of the links between trust in institutions, religiosity and ideology do not assume one-way causal paths; more likely, causal influences between these variables flow in both directions.

The present study has some significant theoretical and societal implications. It underlines the importance of interactional and macro-level variables, such as existential worldviews and ideology, respectively, in understanding aspects of trust in institutions in modern societies. Humans are biased information-seekers that prefer to receive information that confirms their values and worldviews [68]. In terms of theory, a connection is drawn between trust in institutions and existential anxiety both as an experimental condition and as a predisposition. Based on our findings on the contribution of belief to a just world, according to Wang et al. [69], government to confront the COVID-19 epidemic should help the public increase their sense of justice by commending medical staff, controlling prices, cracking down on people making a fortune from a disaster in the country, and actively reporting model cases of interpersonal trust.

## References

- Glanville JL, Paxton P. How do we learn to trust? A confirmatory tetrad analysis of the sources of generalized trust. *Soc. Psychol. Q.* 2007, 70(3):230-242. doi: 10.1177/019027250707000303
- Newton K. Social and political trust in established democracies. In: Norris P. (ed) *Critical citizens: Global support for democratic governance*. Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Rothstein B, Stolle D. *The State and Social Capital: An Institutional Theory of Generalized Trust*. *Comp Polit* 2008, 40(4):441-459. doi: 10.5129/001041508x12911362383354
- Mishler W, Rose R. What Are the Origins of Political Trust? *Comp Polit Stud* 2001, 34(1):30-62. doi: 10.1177/0010414001034001002
- Thomas TD, Abts K, Stroeken K, Weyden PV. Measuring Institutional Trust: Evidence from Guyana. *Journal of Politics in Latin America* 2015, 7(3):85-115. doi: 10.1177/1866802x1500700303
- Paraskevopoulos CJ. Corruption, Inequality and Trust: the Greek vicious circle from incremental adjustment to "critical juncture"? CES papers, Open Forum # 13, Center for European Studies, Harvard University, 2012. Available from <https://ces.fas.harvard.edu/publications/000361-corruption-inequality-and-trust-the-greek-vicious-circle-from-incremental-adjustment-to-critical-juncture>
- Daskalopoulou I. Individual-level evidence on the causal relationship between social trust and institutional trust. *Soc. Indic. Res.* 2019, 144(1):275-298. doi: 10.1007/s11205-018-2035-8
- Ervasti H, Kouvo A, Venetoklis T. Social and institutional trust in times of crisis: Greece, 2002-2011. *Soc. Indic. Res.* 2019, 141(3):1207-1231. doi: 10.1007/s11205-018-1862-y
- Exadaktylos T, Zahariadis N. Quid pro Quo: Political Trust and Policy Implementation in Greece during the Age of Austerity. *Politics & Policy* 2014, 42(1):160-183. doi: 10.1111/polp.12058
- Daskalopoulou I. Satisfaction with democracy and social capital in Greece. *Int. J. Soc. Econ.* 2018, 45(4):614-628. doi: 10.1108/IJSE-03-2017-0063
- Fletcher R, Kalogeropoulos A, Nielsen RK. Trust in UK government and news media COVID-19 information down, concerns over misinformation from government and politicians up. Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism 2020, Available from <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3633002>
- Kritzing S, Foucault M, Lachat R, Partheymüller J, Plescia C, Brouard S. "Rally round the flag": the COVID-19 crisis and trust in the national government. *West Eur. Politics* 2021, 44(5-6):1205-1231. doi: 10.1080/01402382.2021.1925017
- Falcone R, Coli E, Felletti S, Sapienza A, Castelfranchi C, Paglieri F. All We Need Is Trust: How the COVID-19 Outbreak Reconfigured Trust in Italian Public Institutions. *Front. Psychol.* 2020, 11. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.561747
- Franke VC, Elliott CN. Optimism and Social Resilience: Social Isolation, Meaninglessness, Trust, and Empathy in Times of COVID-19. *Societies* 2021, 11(2):35, 1-17. doi: 10.3390/soc11020035
- Devine D, Gaskell J, Jennings W, Stoker G. Trust and the coronavirus pandemic: What are the consequences of and for trust? An early review of the literature. *Political Stud. Rev.* 2021, 19(2):274-285. doi: 10.1177/1478929920948684
- Georgakopoulos T. How Greeks Live During The Pandemic 2020. Available from <https://www.dianeosis.org/en/2020/04/how-greeks-live-during-the-pandemic/>
- Pagliari S, Sacchi S, Pacilli MG, Brambilla M, Lionetti F, Bettache K, ... Zubieta E. Trust predicts COVID-19 prescribed and discretionary behavioral intentions in 23 countries. *PLOS One* 2021, 16(3):e0248334. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0248334
- Jost JT, Glaser J, Kruglanski AW, Sulloway FJ. Political conservatism as motivated social cognition. *Psychol. Bull.* 2003, 129(3):339-375. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.129.3.339
- Jost JT. Ideological asymmetries and the essence of political psychology. *Polit Psychol* 2017, 38(2):167-208. doi: 10.1111/pops.12407
- Diehl C, Wolter F. Attitudes about containment measures during the 2020/2021 coronavirus pandemic: self-interest, or broader

- political orientations? *Res. Politics* 2021, 8(3):205316802110353. doi: 10.1177/20531680211035319
21. Jost JT, Banaji MR. The role of stereotyping in system-justification and the production of false consciousness. *Br J Soc Psychol* 1994, 33(1):1-27. doi: 10.1111/j.2044-8309.1994.tb01008.x
  22. Pratto F, Sidanius J, Stallworth LM, Malle BF. Social dominance orientation: A personality variable predicting social and political attitudes. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 1994, 67:741-763. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.67.4.741
  23. Altemeyer B. The Other "Authoritarian Personality." *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 1998, 30:47-92. doi: 10.1016/s0065-2601(08)60382-2
  24. Lerner MJ. The justice motive: some hypotheses as to its origins and forms. *J Pers* 1977, 45:1-52. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6494.1977.tb00591.x
  25. Duckitt J, Sibley CG. A dual-process motivational model of ideology, politics, and prejudice. *Psychol. Inq.* 2009, 20(2-3):98-109. doi: 10.1080/10478400903028540
  26. Duckitt J, Sibley CG. Personality, Ideology, Prejudice, and Politics: A Dual-Process Motivational Model: Dual-Process Motivational Model. *J Pers* 2010, 78(6), 1861-1894. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6494.2010.00672.x
  27. Duckitt J, Sibley CG. Right wing authoritarianism, social dominance orientation and the dimensions of generalized prejudice. *Eur J Pers* 2007, 21(2):113-130. doi: 10.1002/per.614
  28. Azevedo F, Jost JT. The ideological basis of antisocial attitudes: Effects of authoritarianism, conservatism, religiosity, social dominance, and system justification. *Group Process Intergroup Relat* 2021, 24(4):518-549. doi: 10.1177/1368430221990104
  29. Lerner MJ, Miller DT. Just world research and the attribution process: Looking back and ahead. *Psychol. Bull.* 1978, 85(5):1030-1051. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.85.5.1030
  30. Bègue, L. Beliefs in justice and faith in people: Just world, religiosity and interpersonal trust. *Pers. Individ. Differ.* 2002, 32(3):375-382. doi: 10.1016/s0191-8869(00)00224-5
  31. Otto K, Glaser D, Dalbert C. Mental health, occupational trust, and quality of working life: Does belief in a just world matter? *J. Appl. Soc. Psychol.* 2009, 39(6):1288-1315. doi: 10.1111/j.1559-1816.2009.00482.x
  32. Correia I, Vala J. Belief in a just world, subjective well-being and trust of young adults. In: Dalbert C, Sallay H. (eds) *The justice motive in adolescence and young adulthood: Origins and consequences.* Routledge, 2004.
  33. Zhang Z, Zhang J. Belief in a just world mediates the relationship between institutional trust and life satisfaction among the elderly in China. *Pers. Individ. Differ.* 2015, 83:164-169.
  34. Greenberg J, Pyszczynski T, Solomon S. The causes and consequences of a need for self-esteem: A terror management theory. In: Baumeister RF. (ed) *Public self and private self.* Springer-Verlag, 1986. doi: 10.1007/978-1-4613-9564-5\_10
  35. Solomon S, Greenberg J, Pyszczynski T. *The worm at the core: On the role of death in life.* Random House, 2015.
  36. Lifshin U, Greenberg J, Soenke M, Darrell A, Pyszczynski T. Mortality salience, religiosity, and indefinite life extension: Evidence of a reciprocal relationship between afterlife beliefs and support for forestalling death. *Religion Brain Behav* 2017, 1-13. doi: 10.1080/2153599x.2016.1238841
  37. Lifton RJ. *The broken connection: On death and the continuity of life.* NY: Basic Books, New York, 1979. doi: 10.1177/004057368003700321
  38. Greenberg J, Vail K, Pyszczynski T. Terror management theory and research: How the desire for death transcendence drives our strivings for meaning and significance. In: Elliot AJ. (ed) *Advances in motivation science.* Academic Press, 2014. doi: 10.1016/bs.adms.2014.08.003
  39. Florian V, Mikulincer M. Symbolic immortality and the management of the terror of death: The moderating role of attachment style. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 1998, 74(3):725-734. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.74.3.725
  40. Pyszczynski T, Lockett M, Greenberg J, Solomon S. Terror Management Theory and the COVID-19 Pandemic. *J. Humanist. Psychol.* 2020, 61(2):173-189. doi: 10.1177/0022167820959488
  41. Burke BL, Kosloff S, Landau MJ. Death goes to the polls: A meta-analysis of mortality salience effects on political attitudes. *Polit Psychol* 2013, 34(2):183-200. doi: 10.1111/pops.12005
  42. Tsouvelas G, Massou E, Giotakos O, Triantafyllou FT. Terror Management Theory and Mental Health Stigma. Testing the worldview defense in mental health professionals. *DCNMH* 2021, 4(1): 30-40. doi: 10.26386/obrela.v4i1.148
  43. Devos T, Spini D, Schwartz SH. Conflicts among human values and trust in institutions. *Br J Soc Psychol* 2002, 41(4):481-494. doi: 10.1348/014466602321149849.
  44. Jost JT, Nosek BA, Gosling SD. Ideology: Its Resurgence in Social, Personality, and Political Psychology. *Perspect Psychol Sci* 2008, 3(2):126-136. doi: 10.1111/j.1745-6916.2008.00070.x
  45. Dunn K. The authoritarian predisposition, perceived threat, and trust in political institutions. *PsyArXiv*, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/ewtdr>.
  46. Bovan K, Baketa N, Kovačić M, Čorkalo Biruški D. Trust us, we know what we are doing: institutional trust in Croatia during the COVID-19 crisis. *Southeast Eur. Black Sea Stud.* 2022, 1-22. doi: 10.1080/14683857.2022.2044670
  47. Massou E, Tsouvelas G, Prodromitis G. Public trust, conspiracy theories and political ideology in the COVID-19 era: a cross-sectional Greek study. *OSF Preprints*, 2022. doi: 10.31219/osf.io/k9pfx
  48. Kroh M. Measuring left-right political orientation: The choice of response format. *Public Opin. Q.* 2007, 71(2):204-220. doi: 10.1093/poq/nfm009
  49. Rosenblatt A, Greenberg J, Solomon S, Pyszczynski T, Lyon D. Evidence for terror management theory: I. The effects of mortality salience on reactions to those who violate or uphold cultural values. *J Pers Soc Psychol* 1989, 57(4):681-690. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.57.4.681
  50. Burke BL, Martens A, Faucher EH. Two decades of Terror Management Theory: A meta-analysis of mortality salience research. *Pers. Soc. Psychol. Rev.* 2010, 14(2):155-195. doi: 10.1177/1088868309352321
  51. Zakrisson I. Construction of a short version of the Right-Wing Authoritarianism (RWA) scale. *Pers. Individ. Differ.* 2005, 39(5):863-872. doi: 10.1016/j.paid.2005.02.026
  52. Ai AL, Kastenmüller A, Tice TN, Wink P, Dillon M, Frey D. The Connection of Soul (COS) scale: An assessment tool for afterlife perspectives in different worldviews. *Psychol. Relig. Spiritual.* 2014, 6(4):316-329. doi: 10.1037/a0037455
  53. Brislin R. Back-translation for cross-cultural research. *J Cross Cult Psychol* 1970, 1(3):185-216. doi: 10.1177/135910457000100301

54. Field A. *Discovering Statistics Using SPSS IBM*. (3rd edition). SAGE Publications, 2009.
55. Caplanova A, Sivak R, Szakadatova E. Trust in institutions and compliance with measures to fight COVID-19. *Int. Adv. Econ. Res.* 2021, 27(1):47-60.
56. Bergman ME, Passarelli G, Serricchio F. Decades of party distrust. Persistence through reform in Italy. *QOE-IJES* 2021, 83(2), 15-25. doi: 10.36253/qoe-9590
57. Giovanetti I, Dimopoulou MN, Pavlopoulos V. What is socially responsible during a pandemic? Exploring the role of values, trust and adherence to Covid-19 preventive measures with a mixed-methods study on Italian and Greek young people. In: Klicperova-Baker M, Friedlmeier W. (eds), *Xenophobia vs. Patriotism: Where is my Home? Proceedings from the 25th Congress of the International Association for Cross-Cultural Psychology 2022*, 294. Available from [https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/iaccp\\_papers/294](https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/iaccp_papers/294)
58. Benatov J, Ochnik D, Rogowska AM, Arzenšek A, Mars Bitenc U. Prevalence and Sociodemographic Predictors of Mental Health in a Representative Sample of Young Adults from Germany, Israel, Poland, and Slovenia: A Longitudinal Study during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2022, 19(3):1334. doi: 10.3390/ijerph19031334
59. Ochnik D, Arzenšek A, Rogowska AM, Mars Bitenc U, Benatov J. Changes in Mental Health during the COVID-19 Pandemic among Representative Sample of Young Adults from Germany, Israel, Poland, and Slovenia: A Longitudinal Study. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* 2022, 19(10):5794. doi: 10.3390/ijerph19105794
60. Greenberg J, Jonas E. Psychological motives and political orientation--The left, the right, and the rigid: Comment on Jost et al. (2003). *Psychol. Bull.* 2003, 129(3):376-382. doi: 10.1037/0033-2909.129.3.376
61. Fritsche I, Jonas E, Fankhänel T. The role of control motivation in mortality salience effects on ingroup support and defense. *J Pers Soc Psychol.* 2008, 95(3):524-541. doi: 10.1037/a0012666
62. Tsouvelas G, Pavlopoulos V. Greek host community acculturation expectations towards immigrants from Albania and Pakistan: The role of existential parameters. *EJCoP* 2018, 7(1):181-199. doi: 10.5964/ejcop.v7i1.151
63. Caprara GV, Vecchione M, Schwartz SH, Schoen H, Bain PG, Silvester J, ... Caprara MG. The contribution of religiosity to ideology: Empirical evidences from five continents. *Cross Cult Res* 2018, 52(5):524-541. doi: 10.1177/1069397118774233
64. Sidanius J, Pratto F. *Social dominance: An intergroup theory of social hierarchy and oppression*. Cambridge University Press, 2001.
65. Perry SL, Whitehead AL, Grubbs JB. Culture Wars and COVID-19 Conduct: Christian Nationalism, Religiosity, and Americans' Behavior During the Coronavirus Pandemic. *J Sci Study Relig* 2020, 59(3):405-416. doi: 10.1111/jssr.12677
66. Vieten UM. The "new normal" and "pandemic populism": the COVID-19 crisis and anti-hygienic mobilisation of the far-right. *Social Sciences* 2020, 9(165):1-14. doi: 10.3390/socsci9090165
67. Castillo JC, Miranda D, Torres P. Authoritarianism, Social Dominance and Trust in Public Institutions. Paper presented at: Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology, 2011 July; Istanbul, Turkey. doi: 10.1037/e514882012-001
68. Giotakos O. Fake news in the age of COVID-19: Evolutional and psychobiological considerations. *Psychiatriki* 2022, 33(3):183-184. doi: 10.22365/jpsych.2022.087
69. Wang J, Wang Z, Liu X, Yang X, Zheng M, Bai X. The impacts of a COVID-19 epidemic focus and general belief in a just world on individual emotions. *Pers. Individ. Differ.* 2021, 168:110349. doi: 10.1016/j.paid.2020.110349