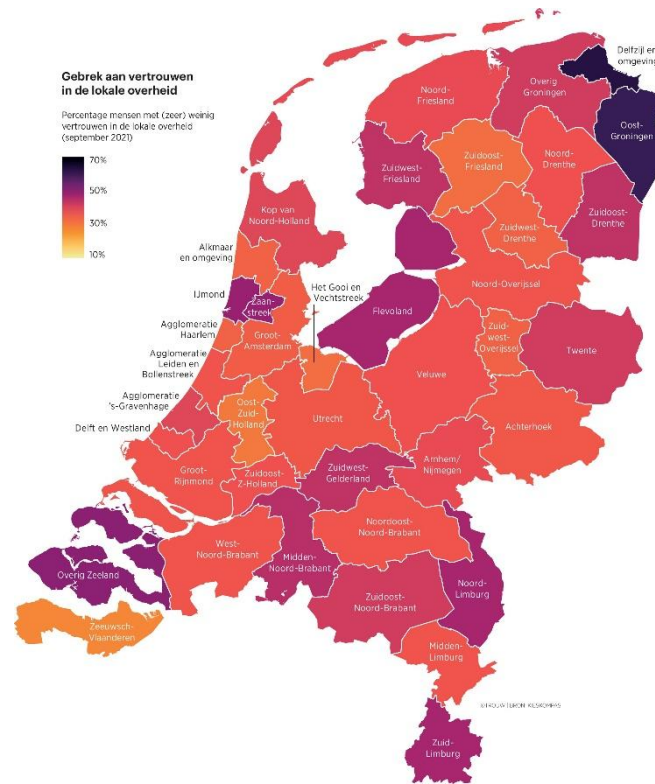


The Impact of Perceptions of Asylum Seekers on Citizens' Trust in Government



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In this work I made use of generative artificial intelligence. Please see the appendix for the disclosure statement.”

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Abstract

This research explored how citizens' perceptions of asylum seekers influence their trust in the government, focusing on the city of Enschede. This study compared two age groups from the ages of 18-30 and 50-70.

The main question is whether the perceptions of asylum policies and asylum seekers lead to different amounts of trust in the government. The study expected that the younger generation, who often have more contact with asylum seekers and use social media, may have more positive perceptions and better trust. On the other hand, older people rely more on traditional media, which results in a more critical view. To explore this, this research used a mixed-methods approach, conducting six interviews and looking at policy documents and case studies. The results showed that trust in the government is an important factor in whether people think asylum policies are fair and transparent. With younger people often wanting more inclusiveness and open communication, and the older generation often focusing more on consistency and fairness.

This research concludes that to build public trust, the government should clearly explain asylum policies. But also communicate with them transparently, and adjust the way they communicate with the different age groups.

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the last years, migration and asylum policies have become one of the most influential and highly debated topics in political discussion worldwide, and the Netherlands is no exception. Asylum seekers, often forced by conflicts, persecution, or economic circumstances, face big challenges in seeking refuge in Europe. While the Netherlands has a long history of offering asylum to people in need, the rising number of refugees in recent decades has led to big debates within society. The impact of asylum policies, such as the *spreidingswet*, which is a policy that requires municipalities to fairly distribute and accommodate asylum seekers across the country. Can have effects on both asylum seekers and society, and this is a critical issue that requires further understanding and exploitation (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2025).

A key aspect of these debates and why they are present revolves around the role of public trust in government institutions. Trust in the government is crucial for the stability and functionality of any democracy, and when you talk about asylum policy, trust becomes a big factor in ensuring the legitimacy and efficiency of the actions of the government. Over the last few decades, the public trust in government but also political institutions has declined across almost all industrial democracies (Valgarðsson et al., 2025). In the Netherlands, this decline in trust has been mainly visible in relation to the handling of asylum policies. Citizens have raised concerns not only about if these policies have been legitimate but also about the effectiveness of the government in response to the challenges that arose by the immigration problem (Bovens & Wille, 2008). These concerns have become more and more relevant, especially as political debates on migration often cause strong and divided opinions among different groups of people.

When looking at this problem the question of how does the public perceive asylum seekers and how does this influence their trust? Becomes an increasingly important question, this is because existing research has looked at several factors that influence public trust in the government, such as economic stability, transparency, and social cohesion (Newton & Norris, 2018). However, the role of asylum seeker awareness in shaping public trust remains relatively underexplored. Some studies have found that public perceptions of migration policies and the presence of asylum seekers can lead to different reactions across different social groups. For example, some view asylum seekers as a strain on public resources and local services, while others view the presence of asylum seekers as an obligation and that it aligns with democratic values (Scholten, 2019).

One of the most important factors that influence trust in the government is the perception of procedural fairness and legitimacy (Tyler, 2006). But also age is a key factor that may influence perceptions of asylum seekers such as their historical awareness or education (Murray & Marx, 2012),

The relationship between public perception and trust in the government has been explored by all kind of different academic fields. And research has shown that the concerns of the public often shape their attitude towards asylum seekers, which directly influence trust in the government

(Hainmueller & Hopkins, 2014). Besides the public perceptions, studies also have shown that trust can be influenced by how the citizens perceive the government as fair and transparent (Levi & Stoker, 2000).

This research seeks to address that gap by focusing specifically on the interplay between public perceptions of asylum policies and trust in government within a local Dutch context. And will do this by this central research question:

To what extent do perceptions of asylum seeker policies influence trust in government across younger and older age groups?

To further refine this question, the following sub-questions are made.

- To what extent does trust in government differ between the 18-30 and 50-70 age groups?
- What are the key factors influencing trust in government?
- To what extent are younger and older age groups informed about asylum policies and the situation of asylum seekers?
- To what extent do perceptions of fairness and transparency in asylum policies influence trust in government across younger and older age groups?

1.1 Social and scientific value of the research

Understanding how citizens' perceptions of asylum seekers influences their trust in the government is crucial for not only scientific reasons but also for societal reasons. This is because this topic contributes to things like political trust, migration studies, and public opinion. Trust in the government is an important factor of democratic stability, and that is why migration is often a deeply discussed topic that can shape people's view on government institutions. By researching this relationship, this study can gain deeper insights into how citizens' perceptions can affect their attitude to government institutions.

On a societal level, this issue has a direct impact on policy implementation, this is because governments rely on public trust to implement their policies effectively, like migrant policies. And if people have bad trust in their government, it can result in resistance or misinformation. And that's why it is important to understand how the awareness of asylum seekers can influence the trust of citizens. This is because, with this information, policymakers can make better policies and tackle their citizen's concerns better (Widaningrum, 2017).

Also, the connection between knowledge and power is also a big topic, this is because actors like political persons, media, and big civil organizations can shape how asylum seekers are perceived. And with this, it can influence their trust in the government. That is why it is important to also look into this relationship as well.

Chapter 2: What are the key factors influencing trust in government?

To explain the key factors influencing trust in government, first trust needs to be explained. Trust has various definitions and therefore it is hard to define. In this thesis the definition of trust defined by Simpson is used, which is: “trust is not a singular, easily defined topic but rather a multifaceted phenomenon that gains extra forms of meaning in different contexts.” (Simpson, 2012).

If you then take this meaning of Simpson's in mind how does trust then connect to the government? Paul Hitlin and Nadezeya Shutiva talked that trust can have many definitions and meanings, but that trust in the government is defined as: “the public's perception of government based on expectations of how it should operate.” (Hitlin et al., 2022). Understanding what the key factors are that shape trust is important, especially in countries or cities that have shifting dynamics and also political polarization. This question identifies the most relevant factors influencing trust in the government and will focus on things like, institutional performance, transparency and demographic variables.

2.1 Institutional performance

Institutional performance is seen as one of the most important factors of public trust in the government. Van de Wale and Bouckaert (2003) argue that in many western democracies the assumption is that better performing public services will lead to more citizen satisfaction, and in turn, will increase trust in the government. However, they say that this argument contains some flaws and that it only fits in certain contexts.

Van de Wale and Bouckaert also talk about the micro-performance approach, this approach talks about that bad performance of the governments creates bad attitudes towards the government, and vice versa. However, citizens don't always see the government as a single actor but as a combination of all different elements, and says that the government = police+ courts+ schools etc. (Van de Wale & Bouckaert, 2003). And thus they argue that performance is not the only criterion used to evaluate government. This is because a one sided focus on performance are not only created in the interactions between citizens and the government but also in day to day citizens relations.

This connects with the concept of performance legitimacy, this concept, talks about that public trust is not only built on a set of beliefs or opinions of people but also on the effectiveness it has on day to day things. And because of this listening to what people need and creating policies that clearly improve the life of citizens are most important (Hetherington, 2005). For example, during the Covid-19 crisis, trust in the government increased in countries who had an effective health service and also good communication delivery saw spikes in public trust (Devine et al., 2020).

2.2 Transparency

Transparency refers to the openness of government activities and to how available the information of the government is to the public, this plays a big role in the amount of trust in the government.

Grimmelikhuijsen et al. (2013) found out that transparency can raise trust when the actions of the

government align with the expectations and values of the citizens. And transparency can enable citizens to look at the decisions made by the government and make sure the government is acting fair and transparent (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2013).

However, transparency is not always beneficial in all situations, Meijer, (2013) argues that while average levels of transparency can improve trust. Too much transparency, especially when it talks about incompetence and corruption, can have an adverse effect. Therefore, the effectiveness of transparency on building trust not only depends on openness but also on the quality and the context of the information that is disclosed by the government.

2.3 Corruption

The perceptions of corruptions are also a key factor that can reduce trust. Rothstein and Stolle (2008) show that when citizens have the perception that the government is corrupt it can reduce confidence in the government, and also can result in loss of trust in democratic systems. Also in societies where corruption is common, the compliance with rules and the participation in the democracy also weaken (Rothstein & Stolle, 2008).

The study done by Anderson and Tverdova (2003), has conducted a survey in sixteen mature and newly established democracies around the globe and have found that "countries with higher levels of corruption express more negative evaluations of the performance of the political system and exhibit lower levels of trust in civil servants". Measures to restore this trust often are anti-corruption campaigns, the implementation of new ethic rules, and the implementation of watchdog institutions. Which are bodies that monitor and investigate the behaviour of the government and play a big role in the reduction of corruption (Feldman & Eichenthal, 2014).

2.4 social and cultural factors

Trust is also influenced by the way people trust each other and how connected they are with the community. Brehm and Rahn (1997) argue that in communities where people trust each other and are more engaged in the society are more likely to have trust in the government, and are more likely to think the government is more representative. While societies with low trust and participation can negatively affect that trust (Brehm & Rahn, 1997).

Adding to this the contact theory of Pettigrew (1998) highlights that communities that take part in diverse organisation or have direct contact with asylum seekers, can reduce prejudice and also can create empathy, which has an influence on how they look at asylum policies and also on their trust in the government (Pettigrew, 1998).

2.5 media and communication

Media also plays a role in shaping trust, while traditional media like TV and newspapers has long been the main stakeholder to help share information between the government and citizens. The digital media and especially social media have transformed this. Tsafati and Ariely (2013) argued that social

media enables more citizen engagement, but also the rapid spread of misinformation which can have an influence on the trust in the government.

Researchers found that negative news exposure, particular about scandals or administrative failures, can decrease trust and the support in the government. How the media frames the actions of the government can also have an influence on the perceptions of the citizens, regardless of the actual performance they have. And that's why the government should not only focus on acting effectively but also on the way the communicate and attack the effects of fake news on citizens (Ceron, 2015).

2.6 Demographic variables

Finally, demographic variables such as age,, education, and income also have an influence on trust. Newton and Norris (2018) have found that generally people with higher income and also higher education are more likely to trust the government. However, these effects can be different for different people and may also be influenced by other factors, such as media use or expose to diverse communities. But also in communities where people see or experience discrimination they see that this may result in a lower level of trust (Newton & Norris, 2000).

For example, younger generations often consume news through platforms like TikTok or Instagram, while the older generations rely on traditional sources. These differences in information consumption can lead to different interpretations of how the government performs or is transparent. Also, younger people may have more interaction with asylum seekers, which results in different perspective and a higher trust in these policies that are associated with asylum seekers.

2.7: Link to research topic

Now that all key factors are discussed, these will be explained in the next part with an explanatory model and some extra theories that dive deeper in these key aspects. All of these factors discussed don't operate on itself. Instead, they all interact with each other to shape how citizens form trust in their government. This combination of all the factors is especially important when you look at the context of asylum policies, because in this context the perceptions of citizens are not only influenced by what the government does, but rather how it communicates, performs and treats their own citizens. In cities like Enschede where asylum policies are directly implemented, the interaction between the government and the citizens becomes more and more clear.

For example, a lack of clear communication about local asylum centres may result in a decrease in trust. all of these aspects provide a foundation for understanding how the perceptions of asylum seeker policies will influence the amount of trust in the government across age groups.

So concluding, trust in the government is shaped by a lot of different factors. And for government, especially those who are involved in areas which are heavily debated, such as asylum and migration it is crucial to combine an effective policy making with also clear communication. all of these aspects will be discussed in the next section more deeply with also adding some extra theories.

Chapter3: Theory

To understand the perception of citizens on asylum seekers and its policies and what effects it has on trust in the government. It is important to have a good theoretical framework. This is because trust, especially when you look at asylum policies, is influenced by all sorts of different factors ranging from perceptions of fairness to generational differences. In the recent years, asylum policies have become more and more controversial and talked about and also this has become a huge topic in the Netherlands. This is because the number of asylum seekers has risen over the last few years in the Netherlands, and this has led to the rise of public debates which went about the political, social and economic implications of asylum governance. Adding to this many citizens have expressed concerns about how the government will use their resources and how legitimate they are.

This study will use a multi-theoretical approach to explain how the perception of citizens will affect their trust in the government., and offers a comprehensive understanding of how citizens form their meanings about asylum policies, and why these perceptions may differ between the younger and older age group. This approach will use six frameworks, which will be discussed one by one. And all of these will not only explain whether citizens trust asylum related policies, but also why that trust differs across age groups and media exposure.

Together, all of these theories will provide a good explanation of how we can explore how citizens evaluate asylum policies, how they perceive fairness and transparency of government actions and how all of these actions contribute to the changing level of trust.

3.1 Procedural justice theory

The first theory is the theory of procedural justice, developed by Tom Tyler (2003,2006). This framework will be the main framework that will be used and that is why it will be explained first. This theory argues that people's trust in the government depends not really on what the outcomes of decisions are, but more on the perceived fairness and transparency of the process. Tyler explains that trust in the government is shaped by fairness, transparency, and legitimacy. And he also says that trust and compliance with the government only increases when people see authorities acting justly (Tyler, 2003). This framework is important in the context of asylum governance, this is because trust in the government really depends on how fair people think policy enforcements are but also how fair the decision-making process is. Tylers's procedural justice theory also suggests that legitimacy not just comes from the results of policies, but also from how fair the process is perceived (Tyler & American Judges Association, 2007). Besides that, research also has shown that people are more likely to accept decisions when they believe authorities have treated them respectfully and neutrally, even if the outcome is not in their favour (Murphy, 2005). This principle of Murphy is interconnected with asylum governance, this is because trust in the government relies on whether policies are communicated and implemented fairly, and even effective policies may fail to gain support from the citizens if it is unfair (Hamm et al., 2017). But what does make this procedure fair? Tom Tyler

suggested four terms on how procedural justice is defined. The first one is that people want to have an opportunity to explain their situation or tell their side of the story. Secondly Tyler says that “people react to evidence that the authorities with whom they are dealing are neutral.” Third, people want to be treated with dignity and politeness and also want their rights respected. And lastly, people look for clues about what legal authorities are like and what they want to do (Tyler et al., 2013).

The connection between the procedural justice system and trust becomes clear when you look at how the government takes their actions. This is because people are more likely to accept decisions and view policies as legitimate when they are treated with respect and when the government is transparent even if those actions are not beneficial to them. This theory is particularly relevant when looking at asylum governance, this is because in asylum governance policies may still not get good support from citizens when they are seen as unfair. Which can result in that if the government lacks fairness and transparency in the process of making policies this can result in a reduction of trust in the government.

And that’s why the procedural justice theory is important for this study, because it helps explain why trust in the government can vary. Not only for the outcomes of the policies, but also for how policies are perceived by the citizens

3.2: Institutional trust theory

Procedural justice doesn’t fully explain trust in the government and that’s why the institutional trust theory. This theory helps by focusing on how government performance shapes confidence and also it looks at the importance of how citizens look at the performance of the government, but also look at the transparency and what they do (Fairbrother et al., 2022). Also trust is not only shaped by if the government treats its citizens fairly but also trust is shaped by how the citizens perceive the government and if they are effective and really take on the problems that are important to the citizens.

According to Fairbrother et al. trust in the government is really shaped by how citizens view them and align with their own views. For example, citizens are more likely to trust the government when they see that they are busy with looking at big problems such as asylum policies, and that they do this fairly and transparent. On the other hand, inconsistent enforcement or a lack of transparency of the government in asylum policies can reduce the trust of the citizens in the government, especially those directly affected by migration policies.

Adding to this, political trust is also strongly connected to the effectiveness of the government in addressing things like social issues. Ziller and Andreß researched about this in 2021, they found that when people are satisfied with the results and performance of the government their trust is often higher (Ziller & Andreß, 2021). This theory also applies to asylum policy, this is because when local authorities like Enschede are seen as transparent and effective the trust of the citizens rises. However, when they fail or lack transparency, the trust of the citizens may decline..

That's why it is important to look at this theory in this study this is because if people don't find that the city of Enschede is making good policies or is not transparent this may result in a decline of trust, but also does this decline in trust if it is present has an causality that the government is not transparent.

3.3 Framing Theory

The media also plays a big role in shaping the perceptions of the public especially when you look at both traditional and digital media platforms, this is because the media not only informs people but also how they interpret things. The framing theory written by Entman (1993), explains how the media highlights certain parts of a story whole ignoring others. This affects how people view issues like asylum policies, where asylum seekers can be framed either as needing help or as threats to the economy or national security.

This problem of the framing of the media can have real consequences for the trust in the government, this is because when media broadcasts let people believe that the government is failing in their asylum policies. This can lead to citizens who think that the government is unfair or just not in state to make asylum policies. On the other hand, if the media presents asylum seekers as vulnerable and shows the government as working to protect them, this can have a good impact in the trust in the government and its policies (Dempster & Hargrave, 2017).

The addition of social media plays also a big role in this theory this is because while social media platforms can allow for better citizens engagement it can also carry the risk of spreading misinformation. Song and Lee (2015) argue that social media can lead to more information that can lead to good decisions, however it can also lead to the spread of misinformation. For example if the media says that the government is bad or is doing their tasks badly it can lead to reducing the trust of the citizens, while the government may not even do its task badly.

The media can directly influence how the public feels about the government and can also have an influence on trust. Studies have shown that exposure to certain types of media sources can change the attitude of citizens and also can lead to a shift in opinions. (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2006). On the one hand, if the media reports the government as fair and transparent trust in the government risen, however if the media focuses on the failures of the media or just spread misinformation it can lead to the reduce of trust.

This theory is important because media influence cannot only have an influence on the trust of the citizens on the government, but also have an influence on the effectiveness of the policies the government makes. When the government produces its policies fairly and transparent, it helps to gain the confidence of the citizens.

The gap between the older and younger generation also complicates the dilemma of media narratives.. Older citizens tend to consume traditional media like newspapers or television, which are more institutional overall. While younger generations rely on platforms like TikTok, Instagram or, X

(formerly Twitter), where information is decentralized, and is more likely to present extreme views (Eberl et al., 2018).

3.4 Generational theory

To come back on the generational issue the generational theory explains why trust varies across age groups. Generational differences and their trust in the government are important key considerations, this is because younger individuals have often a wider range of social networks and diverse environments while older generations often have different historical experiences and have traditional thoughts about migration. However, studies have found that older generations often have more trust in governmental institutions than younger generations (Christensen & Lægheid, 2014). Another study also has found that the change of trust in the government has changed throughout the years, finding out that nowadays the trust of the younger generation is less than that of the older generation. Which you also can see in Figure 1 (Dalton, 2005).

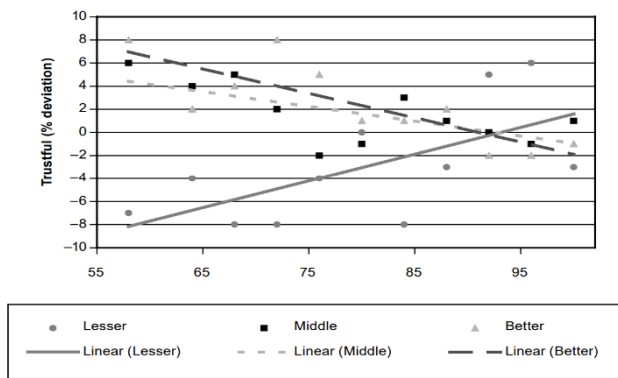


Figure 1: changing relationship in trust In the government

A big reason for the difference between the younger and older generation is that both get their information from different sources, the older generation often watch or read news from traditional sources that back up their traditional views. While the younger generation, get their information from many different sources, especially online from short videos. In these videos it is often more critical or conflicting videos, which can result in the younger generations being more sceptical about the government.

The understanding of this theory and why it is important to the trust in the government is that these generational differences can be a huge factor for the government when making decisions or policies. This is especially a huge factor in asylum policy making, because the government needs to tailor their communication to different media sources. And also keep in mind the differences between the different age groups. And if they keep this in mind it can result in that the government gets better communication with the citizens and also get a good image for the citizens.

3.5 Intergroup contact theory

To add to this generational theory and look at how different generation view asylum seekers and the policies that come with it, we will look at the intergroup contact theory. This theory developed by Allport and later expanded by Pettigrew (1998), suggest that direct or indirect contact between citizens or groups can reduce prejudice and increase empathy. This theory is especially relevant when you look at the discussions about migration and asylum policies, this is because it helps to explain why some people do have more trust in the government than others. In the article of Pettigrew, he talks about that Allport has said that positive effects of intergroup contact only occur in situations marked by four key conditions: “equal group status within the situation; common goals; intergroup cooperation; and the support of authorities, law, or custom”. And the research of Pettigrew added another condition which was that the contact situation must have friendship potential.

Younger generations, for example those living in Enschede, are more likely to have contact with people from different cultural backgrounds including asylum seekers. This contact with people from different cultural background if it is in school, neighbourhoods or other social activities plays a role in how the opinions of the younger generation is influenced. The study by Van Assche et al. (2022) further talks about this, Van Assche supports this view by saying that the contact of different groups is effective for reducing prejudice even when there are real threats or tensions between them. The large research of Van Assche et al. show that contact is associated with reduced discrimination. Which indicated that lowering prejudice is not only a one time trick, but that it has real causes that work in many countries and in many different political situations.

On the other hand, the older generation especially those who live in old school parts of the city or rural areas. Are less likely to have direct contact with asylum seekers, and that is why their views are often shaped by indirect sources like the media or political actions. Which then would reinforce their stereotypical views (Heidenreich et al., 2019). This would result in that these citizens from the older generation would be more sceptical and would have more distrust in the government. This divide in generation contact with asylum seekers affects how citizens trust the government. Younger people who see asylum seekers as integrated member of society and that they also contribute to the world, are more likely to trust the government when they manage asylum policies. While the older generation with less contact may see the policies of the government as ineffective or a threat, especially when their views are shaped by the media.

Understanding this issue is important for the government, this is because promoting contact between different groups can help reduce prejudice and work further on better policies. As written in the article of Van Assche et al., contacts between groups can even work when there is social tension between them. which makes it a important tool for looking at public anxiety around asylum and migration.

3.6 Social capital theory

Finally, the last theory is the social capital theory, this theory emphasizes the importance of civic engagement and interpersonal trust. Newton (2001) argues that often communities who have a higher social capital, such as communities who volunteer a lot or take part in other organisation in their community, tend to have higher trust in the government and other public institutions. This theory mainly goes about that trust is not only dependant on the media or other political structures but also that trust is made through daily social interaction and participation in public activities (Newton, 2001).

If you look at this theory in context of asylum policies and how they shape the trust of the citizens is that individuals who are actively involved in their community are more likely to experience diverse perspectives and also engage more with people from different backgrounds. For example people who volunteer with local organizations that help asylum seekers or participate in events where all sorts of people from different backgrounds are can reduce social distance and those people also get a better understanding of the challenges asylum seekers face (Putnam, 2000).

Social capital also helps to protect citizens from fear that often is spread by bad media, this is because communities who have a lot of social capital and have real life interaction and shared experiences are less likely to support harsh rules and are more likely to back up human approaches to asylum governance (Hooghe & Stolle, 2003).

Social capital is important because it is not only about how well the governments perform or communicate. But also about how citizens engage with each other and with local institutions. Initiatives that promote local volunteering and civic education can help build trust in the government over time. This is especially important in areas where there is a lot of social tension about migration or asylum seekers. Summing up, social capital is not only important for the bonding of communities but also important for trust.

3.7 Explanatory model

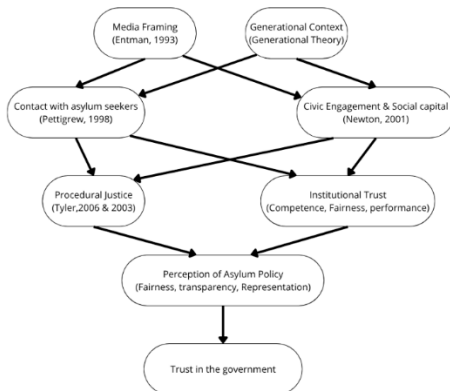


Figure 2: An explanatory model of the theories described above

To get a better understanding of how all these theories influence the perceptions of citizens on asylum seeker policies and how this affects their trust this Explanatory Model is made. This model bring all the different theoretical perspectives in one model to really understand what does have an influence on trust in the government. In this model all of the different frameworks will not be treated separate, but rather it will look at how various factors interact with each other. This will be done to really get a good look at how these factors shape the trust in the government, and also this model will give a better description of how these complex relationships will be important for this research.

This model starts at the top with looking at the external influences, which are media framing and the generational context. Looking at the media framing explained by the framing theory of Entman (1993), this theory play a big role in how asylum seekers and their policies are presented by the public. This is because if the media talks only about the threats of asylum seekers and how bad they are for the economy, this can have a negative impact on how public attitudes are affected. Adding to this the generational theory helps to understand how these media effects differ between different age groups. Where older citizens, most likely consume more traditional media, are influenced different that the younger generation. Who uses social media and are more exposed to different and more divided opinions.

These external influences are further explained and shaped by interpersonal experiences and social environments. According to the contact theory of Pettigrew, direct contact with asylum seekers such as living in the same neighborhood, attending to the same school or working together can reduce prejudice and can also increase empathy. Meanwhile, the social capital theory written by Newton in 2001 suggested that individuals who are more engaged within their communities, or volunteer in their communities are more likely to build trust towards the government. Because of these experiences of volunteering this can have an affect on how citizens would react to the negative media portrayals. This

is because if they volunteer or talk with asylum seekers they also know what plays behind these media sources and if they are true.

In the middle of this model there is looked at how citizens interpret government action through two theories, which are the procedural justice theory and the institutional trust theory. Citizens don't only look and rate asylum policies based on their outcomes, but also on how fair, consistent and transparent those policies are implemented. The procedural justice theory written by Tom Tyler talks about the importance of legitimacy and the fair treatment of citizens, while the institutional trust theory by Fairbrother et al looks at how citizens perceive the performance and competence of the government and how this shapes confidence of the citizens in the government.

All of these layers of this model eventually come to the block of shaping citizens' perceptions of asylum policy. There are some critical questions to be asked whether the trust is increased or weakened. Some of these are whether individuals believe the policies are fair, whether they feel informed and represented and the last one is whether they see the government acting in a transparent and effective way.

Finally all of these theories come together in the final variable, which is trust in the government. When citizens feel that they are treated fairly, respectfully, and feel well informed and involved in the process their trust increases. However, on the other hand if there is negative media exposure, zero to non-civic engagement and citizens perceive that the government is not handling transparently, this can result in a downfall of trust. Especially when talking about sensitive topics like asylum governance.

Concluding, this model gives a clear guideline for empirical research, and by combining top-down influences like media and institutions with bottom-up influences like citizens' experiences and social networks. This model offers a good foundation for exploring how different age groups in Enschede view asylum policies and how this has impact on their trust.

3.9 To what extent are younger and older age groups informed about asylum policies and the situation of asylum seekers?

Now that the key factors that influence trust in the government are discussed, this research will now look at the other research questions. To answer these questions, 6 people have been interviewed, with 3 from the younger generation and 3 from the older generation. Firstly this section will talk about to what extent younger and older groups are informed about asylum policies and the situation of asylum seekers. And then I will talk about to what extent trust in the government differs and how the perceptions of fairness and transparency in asylum policies influences their trust. But first I will explain how the younger and older age groups are informed about asylum policies and their situation of asylum seekers.

Younger age group

Talked about in the previous question, media plays a big role in spreading information and when I conducted the interviews with the younger generation I really saw this. This is because when I asked if they had a good idea of the situation of the asylum seekers, all participants said that they did not get a really good and clear idea of the situation. The younger generation talked about that they find that the government, for this example in the city of Enschede does not do a good job in spreading information about it. This could be the fact that they only get their information from social media sites. This is because when I looked at the results of the older generation, who get their information from more traditional sources like local newspapers, talk shows on tv and digital news sites, said that they all got a pretty clear idea of the asylum laws and also about how they treat them. Understanding public awareness of asylum policies and the situation around it, is essential for evaluating the effectiveness of how the government communicates. This is why this question will be answered first.

Older age group

As said before the older age group reveals that they are better informed about these laws and also the asylum seeker situation, and these are shaped by certain factors such as personal interests, but also the way they consume the media. In my results I see that the older age group, has somewhat of a higher understanding of the whole asylum situation. As said before I think the traditional media can have a real impact of why this is. This is when these people look at the traditional media and read newspapers from the local area, such as the Tubantia, or watch Rtv Oost. They get more information about the situation, and also what happens in the world/ their own city. As you can see in the graph below, the social en cultureel planbureau of the Netherlands has done a research on what media sources the average person reads and for this question the graph of the dagblad(daily paper) and huis-aan-huisblad/ gemeente- wijkkrant (local papers from the neighborhood) is important to look at. This is because if you look at these graphs you clearly can see that the older generation reads a lot more daily papers than the younger generation. and if you look at the local papers from the neighbourhood you can see that the younger generation not even reads those. And this confirms my research on the

interviews. This is because I saw that the older generation reads way more about these topics, and thus also is somewhat better informed about all the laws and the situation that play in their city (Schaper et al., 2019). The second thing is that while the older generation is better informed it could also be because I interviewed people who worked in companies that deal with these situations. For example, one of the participants worked at a social housing association and dealt with housing asylum seekers, who were already longer in Enschede. But to counter this I interviewed a woman who was a house mom, and she also argued that the information she had about the whole situation was rather good so while it can have an impact on it, it may not be the main reason why he has a good knowledge about it.

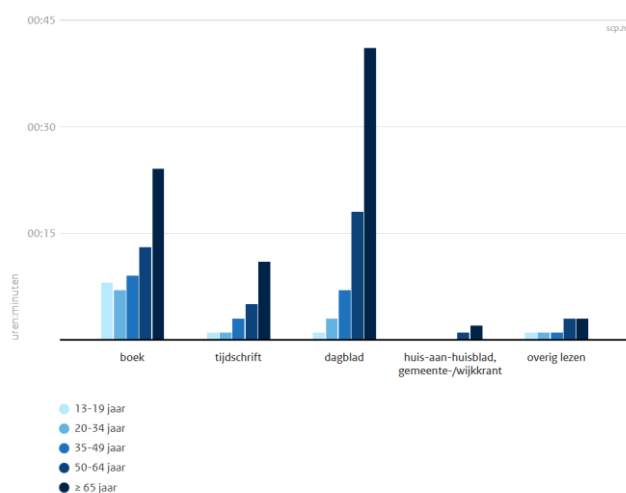


Figure 3: Reading time by age

3.10 Conclusion

Based on the interviews that were conducted, there appears to be variation in the extent to which different age groups are informed about asylum policies and the situation around it. While one of the younger participant had a high knowledge of the situation, this was partly to do because his dad was a civil servant. And that's why this level of knowledge was not really necessarily representative of all younger participants. In general, the older participant's seemed to be more informed about the issue if you don't take the age into consideration, a reoccurring theme across all the interviews that were held that all participants talked about the lack of transparency from the government. participants from both the younger and older generation talked about that the government should do more to clearly explain things like, the local developments related to asylum policy. And one participant even suggested that citizens should be informed before any decision are implemented, this would safe the gossip an rumours that would eventually come with it and this would result in a better trust in the government. And this also let you see that this example, let you see that the citizens of Enschede are not informed enough about the situation, which could lead to public dissatisfaction and a reduce in trust.

Chapter4: Methods

To look at the extent to which citizens' perceptions of asylum policies influence their trust in the government, this study uses an mixed-methods framework. By combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches, this research want to look at the complexity of public opinions and how this related to the trust in the government within a local context. The mixed-method design is not only chosen because of its flexibility but also because it can helps to get a better understanding of how perceptions are formed and how they different between age groups.

The research focuses on the city of Enschede, Enschede is a medium-sized city located in the eastern part of the Netherlands, this city is chosen because of the close connection it has with me, but also because there are all kinds of ethnicities, and also because there are ongoing discussions about migration and the integration of the asylum seekers. The municipality of Enschede has hosted an asylum seeker centrum over the past few years, with accommodation for the asylum seekers but also things like language lessons and social activities (*Asielzoekerscentrum (Azc)*, 2025). And that makes it a relevant and a good city to look at how the public perceptions of the citizens affect their trust. Besides all of this, studying one city allows for greater control over contextual factors such as local media coverage, policy implementation, and also the exposure of asylum related policies.

To look at how different views impact the trust in the government, this study has focused on two age groups, which are citizens aged 18 to 30 and those aged 50 to 70. These two groups were chosen because this research wanted to look at the differences between generations in trust and also how they look at things. And by holding the location constant, it allowed the research to isolate the influence of age-related factors, such as the use of media or social engagement without getting different data from different regional variation.

The data collection of this study mainly relied on both primary and secondary data. The primary data consists of six semi structured interviews with 3 from each age group all resident from the city of Enschede. Participants were chosen by using purposive sampling, this was done to ensure that variation in all sorts of aspects were gotten. And this ensured a great variation, which allows for a wide range of perspectives from each age category. The interviews were conducted in Dutch and lasted between 20 and 30 minutes. Before each interview, participants were informed about the research, and also that it was been recorded. It was also said that everything was anonymous and that they had the right to withdrawal at any time and verbal consent was gotten for audio recording. Interview questions were used (see appendix B) to ensure consistency across all interviews, while still allowing the participant to have space for open ended questions. Topics of the interview included perception of asylum seekers, media and trust in the government.

The interview questions were made with the help of the selected factors from the theory that was discussed above. Which were: trust in the government, perceived legitimacy, transparency, media influence and perceptions of asylum seekers. This you can see in the interview questions that are

displayed in appendix B, for example trust in the government was asked through question 3 till 9, and the rest of the theory was also used to make other question which you can see in the interview questions.

After the interviews, all recording were transcribed using an built in transcription tool of word. After that all transcriptions were checked manually to ensure that everything was accurate. After that was done a summary was made to allow for a good comparison between each participant. In addition to the interviews, the study also used secondary data sources to support the findings of the interview and to do prior research. These data sources included things like case studies, policy document and government data. The document were selected based on relevance to the research questions, and were scanned and analysed to ensure no biased occurred. A content analysis of the document has taken place after this to look at how asylum policies are seen by the citizens and also on looking how transparency and legitimacy was gotten by the government.

In conclusion, this study uses a mixed methods design to look at how different generations in Enschede perceive asylum policies and how these perception influence their trust in the government. the combination of semi structured interviews and document analysis offers both depth and context, while the local focus on Enschede allows for looking at how these policies has an impact on the local level. The methods that were chosen ensured that the research was reliable, while also providing a basis for replication or further expansion in future research.

Chapter 5: To what extent does trust in government differ between the 18-30 and 50-70 age groups?

Now that the key factors that influence trust in the government are discussed, this research will look at the other research questions. To answer these questions, 6 people have been interviewed, with 3 from the younger generation and 3 from the older generation. In these interviews, people are asked about different views about the government and asylum seekers and are asked to rate their trust in the government and the performance of the government. A summary of the results of these interviews can be seen in Appendix C. To explain the extent how which trust in the government differs between the older and younger age groups a graph is made.

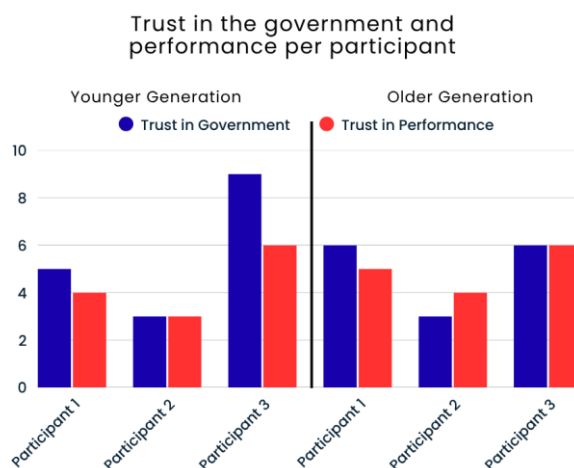


Figure 4: trust in the government and performance per participant

The people I have interviewed in the younger generation ranged from students to people who worked. However, I interviewed 2 students and 1 person who worked. The youngest person was 21 and the oldest was 24. And for the older generation, ranged from people who worked to people who stayed at home and did not do any work and the age was from 56 to 62. If you look at the graphs you cannot see a significant difference in trust. Trust in the government plays an important role in shaping how people live, but also make choices. The analysis I did of the younger and older age group which I interviewed, reveals some differences in the amount of trust, but it also revealed that the nature of their trust also differs. While both age groups express skepticism to some degree, the reason that lay behind it and the intensity of their trust in the government differs. This is mainly because they are shaped by generational experiences but also by the way they get their information. As seen in the graph the older age group, expressed somewhat of a moderate trust, where the average trust in the government was a 5. And the older age group has an average score of an 5.7. because these changes are pretty small, this section will look at both participants three with a high level of trust, and both of participants two with a low level of trust. This is done to get a better understanding of how the perceptions of the participants influence their trust and to use Tyler's factors to get an explanation of how the trust differs.

Participant 3 of the younger generation rated their trust in the government a 9, Where he talks about how he does not have distrust in the government and that it is in general pretty clear, but he also talks about how there is a typical image of the government after the elections that the government does not do the things they need to do regardless of the party that wins. The trust of Participant 2 was mainly affected by sources like the NOS app and conversations with his father who is a public servant and talked about how he had pretty good knowledge about the news. But also he talked about how he worked at the AZC in Enschede one time, but besides his one-time work there he did not have a great knowledge of the whole situation.

For the older age group, the participant who had the highest trust was participant 3 and 1, but for this section, participant 3 was chosen because she had also a higher trust in the performance of the government. This participant rated their trust a 6 out of 10 and talked about how she had a good level of information about asylum seekers, but not about the laws that are connected to this. Besides that, this participant followed the news on a lot of different kinds of channels, such as local newspapers, Nos app, and talk shows on TV. Her vision of asylum seekers is that they are very welcome, but that the government could inform her better about how they give shelter and threaten asylum seekers.

Besides these 2 positive participants, there were also two participants who have a very low trust in the government. Where both of the participants rated their trust a 3 out of 10, the younger participant rated her trust a 3. This was mainly because of the recent fall of the cabinet, which will be explained more deeply in the discussion. The information of this younger participant about the whole situation of the asylum seekers was not that high and she also talked about how she did not really follow news, but if she did she sometimes followed news of the Nos or short stories on Instagram. And if she did see the news she often sees that asylum seekers are presented as people who need help.

For the older generation, the participant also rated his trust a 3 out of 10, he talked about that he could have said that his trust was very high because he works for the government, but his trust is very low, this is mainly because of the transparency of the government. One example of this was that he heard some news about his job more early on the news than from his boss, which really resulted in a reduction of trust. This participant really follows the news and if he does follow the news it is through local newspapers and television. And if he looks at this news he mainly gets bad news, such as about criminality.

These views of the participants from both the negative group and the positive groups show that trust in the government is not only influenced by factors such as age but also by things such as individual experiences, how they get their news, and also how they look at asylum seekers and the transparency of the government. According to the model of Tyler, Trust is influenced by things like fairness, transparency, and legitimacy. In which he talks that legitimacy not only comes from the results of policies but how fair the process is perceived.. This you can see at the answers of the participants in the interviews. In which Participant 3 of the older groups found that the government did good things which resulted in a 6. While the older participant 2, talked about a lack of communication

which resulted in a 3. Also when you looked at the younger participants, it was seen that access to good information and looking at the news can have an influence on the trust in the government, while participant 2 of the young generation did not follow the news that well, and when she did, she only got negative news which reduced her trust in the government.

Concluding, while age can have a variance in trust. Which you can see from the results of a 5 vs a 5.7, these interviews also let you see that personal views, legitimacy, and how you consume media are just as important. The participants who tend to consume more media from a lot of different sources and feel well-informed tend to have a higher trust than the participants who don't.

These insights into the trust in the government, let us see that the government needs to improve communication transparency, but also the government needs to adapt its strategies to get information to all generations in order to regain trust in them.

Chapter 6: To what extent do perceptions of fairness and transparency in asylum policies influence trust in government across younger and older age groups?

Trust in the government is essential for the legitimacy of the government, but also on the effectiveness of the government in tasks like asylum and immigration. In the Netherlands this of course has been a big topic, and that's why I have asked in the interviews that I held how the citizens of Enschede looked at the fairness and transparency in asylum policies. According to Tylers procedural justice theory he says that people are more likely to trust and comply with the government when they believe that the policies that they implement are fair and transparently. This part will takes this theory but also some of the other theory that were discussed in the theory section and will use them to look at how this influences trust in the government.

By looking at the data from the older and younger age groups, it becomes clear that the perceptions of fairness and transparency play a big role in how it shapes their trust, and also while both groups have some of the same views in the transparency and fairness of the government there are also some slight differences in how they look at the government and this will be discussed in this part. To first start explaining how the perceptions of fairness and transparency influences their trust, I will first start by explaining the perception of the younger generation and how they look at the fairness and the transparency of the government and then I will explain how this has influenced their trust in the government. This would also then be done with the older generation, and if this is discussed I will compare the two to look at if there are any differences between the two generations.

Young people, don't see trust in the government as something that can be taken for granted or that always stay the same. Instead they think that trust is not a given fact, they rather see that trust depends on how fair and honest and transparent the government is. This reflects Rohstein's (2001) argument that trust does not disappear from poor performance but from a lack of fairness and equality. One of the examples of this you can see from participant 2 of the younger generation who says:: "And I think that the young people who are interested in politics or who take part in those kinds of things aren't always a very good representation of youth or young people. I find that a shame, because it creates a big bias, and then it's presented as if that is what the youth wants, whereas I don't think everyone of that age thinks that way. So I think it's a pity that it's not more mixed". In this statement that he makes he talks about that while the government is still doing a good job to use the vision of the younger generation, they often don't really represent all of the youth which can result in bad decisions, and thus not always is transparent. This fits with the fact of Rothstein, where he talks about that perceived fairness and respect is often more important in the outcomes if it goes about shaping trust.

The importance of the transparency, can you also see in the interview of the participant of 21, here he talks about that the government could be way more transparent. He talks about that after the Covid period there were more scandals such as the kindertoeslag affaire an that he questions if there is transparency of the government. This has been a reoccurring theme, where participant 1 of the younger

generation talks about that the government has not found a way to solve these scandals, but also that the government does not listen to the people. This is because she says: “I think the government thinks on short time basis and because of this they don’t see what they are doing now”.

However when it comes to the fairness of the treatment of asylum seekers, the younger generation often finds that asylum seekers are not treated fairly nowadays and that the government should do it better. So the younger generation, is often more willing to extend their trust and support to asylum seekers

Besides this the media also plays a big role in shaping the younger generations. Most younger people, don’t really follow the news, but if they do it they often see it on Instagram or when they watch the news with their parents. However when I asked about how the news that they followed represented the asylum seekers or the government they almost all said that when they saw news article the articles were often bad or neutral. Which of course, Is totally normal because when you only follow the main articles these are often bad and when you dive deeper in to the news you also find some better information, but the younger generation does not always do this.

So concluding the younger generation, talks about that for them the transparency is not that good, and that they also talk about that more transparency is needed to raise their trust. Besides this the younger generation also talks about that transparency and fairness is not only about just making or giving the information to them, but also about how effective this is and in the way they give them the information. And if they do this better, for example by making podcasts or making the news more attractive to them it can improve the engagement and the trust in the government.

In contrast to the younger generation, the older generation was a bit more sceptical towards both the asylum policies and also the fairness and transparency of them. While their trust in the performance in the government higher was then the younger generation their trust in the government was less that that of the younger generation. Out of this result you can derive that the older generation cares less about how the government perform but more about how fair and transparent they are. For example, you can take participant 3 from the older generation, who has rated his trust in the government a 3 and his trust in the performance a 4. While it is not that higher. He talks about that he finds the transparency of the government scandalous. When I asked him why it was that he found the transparency scandalous, he talked about that he works for the government and that he needed to know from a news paper that their were certain problems playing on the work floor. And besides keeping that a mystery he also find that the government does not talk about their failures, which thus has an impact on the perception of him on how fairly the government is.

While this participant was negative about the transparency both of the other participants from his generation were also not happy about the transparency, while the younger generation was more happy to see asylum seekers, the older generation was more sceptical. They rather see less asylum seekers coming to the Netherlands, this is because they want to see their children getting a house, but also because of the criminality, Participant 3 of the older generation talks about that he does not hate

asylum seekers and that the people who need to come to the Netherlands are welcome, but nowadays there is so much criminality, which he does not accept and he find that if people are doing this they need to be send back to their country. While another participant talks about that you need to solve the problem of asylum seekers not in this country but in that country were the problem is, and that “gelukzoeker” need to stay in their own country.

When you look at the older generation, it was found that they had a bit more information about the situations in the country but also about asylum seekers this can come because of the years long of experience, but also because they follow a lot more news and look a lot more tv. For example Participant 1 always looks the news at 6 o clock on the tv, while another participant also reads a lot of news. This results in that they don’t only see the bad news but also the good news. Which then maybe results in a higher rating in the trust in performance. But because of this the older generation has more focus on the transparency and fairness, then the younger generation has.

So this question has explored how the perceptions of fairness and transparency influence trust in the government across the younger and older generation. Looking at the procedural justice theory of tom Tyler, the findings of this section highlight that both generations sees that fairness and transparency is important in how they trust the government.

Younger respondent show a more dynamic form of trust, their trust is significantly influenced by how transparent and fair the government communicates their information. For this generation fairness is not only about the end result, but also about being included and being engaged in the process of making decisions but also the whole process of asylum seekers. Their suggestion to improve all of this is to make communication more accessible to this generation, such as podcast or youth-focused sites. And concluding their support for asylum seekers tend to be more often more positively then that of the older generation.

In contrast to them, the older generation tens to have a more sceptical trust in the government, especially when they look at the transparency of the government. Their criticism focusses heavily on, how the government handle the situation of asylum seekers, and also the unfair prioritatiin of them. and despite having often more interest in the news and the media, their trust is still low in the government and this is often because they see that problems are often ignored or kept behind curtains. However, what both groups share is the understanding that trust needs to be earned, by treating them fair and being clear about what they are going to do. However the younger generation is often more open to rebuild their trust. While the older generation does not really sees this happening because of past experiences and repeated failures.

Lastly, this comparison shows that trust in the government is not just only about making the right choices and having high performance, but also about being fair and transparent and having great communication. And because of this policy makers should therefore adapt their approaches to address these generational differences and concerns. And only by doing this the government can hope to get a better trust in them.

Discussion and conclusion

This study has aimed to investigate the research question: To what extent do perceptions of asylum seeker policies influence trust in government across younger and older age groups? To do this there was looked at the citizens of Enschede. Drawing on theories like Tyler's procedural justice theory, the institutional trust theory of van de Walle and Bouckaert, the media influence of Ceron and the generational differences of Eberl. This research has looked at the complex relation between the perceptions of citizens in Enschede on the transparency, fairness and how this have affected their trust in the government. The findings of the interviews revealed that the different generations share certain viewpoints while also have totally different opinions. This is import for trust in the government but also for the results and policies that the government makes, especially in the situation where the Netherlands is now with the situation of the Tweede Kamer.

At the heart of this research the idea of trust was defined, trust was defined as: that trust is not a singular, easily defined topic but rather a multifaceted phenomenon that gains extra forms of meaning in different contexts. The last part is especially important because it talks about that trust gains extra forms of meaning in different contexts, this is true and with the procedural justice framework of Tyler it can be explained. This is because not only the outcomes of policies are important but also the way these policies are communicated and in the way these are communicated the trust can have different contexts. For example the younger generation talks about that they have a different kind of trust than the older generation, this younger age group are more willing to engage with and support the actions of the government if they are perceived as fair and transparent, and also aligns with the institutional trust theory. When they see that the government is acting fairly and transparently they also have more trust in the government.

To add to this, the example of participant 3 of the younger generation is used , where he criticized the government for not representing the diverse meanings of the youth. Which in he says that he believe that because of this the youth is not represented great. And this illustrates how perceptions of inclusiveness directly influence the amount of trust. Adding to this, their was across al age groups a worry about the scepticism of the government, citing scandals like the kindertoeslagaffaire, that damaged their confidence in the transparency and fairness of the government. They talked about that transparency should not only be about providing information but also about delivering it right. this doing by things like making it more accessible or better platforms for all age groups such as podcasts, which results in a better understanding and participation of this group

On the other hand, the older generation is a bit more sceptical about the trust in the government, this is mainly because of their deeply rooted mistrust in the government. Despite rating the performance of the government somewhat higher than the younger generation, this group often talked about that the communication of the government is insufficient and that they are not clear about the thing they want to do. Participant 2 of the older generation described the government's

transparency as scandalous, because he needed to hear about critical problems through the press and not via the government itself. The scepticism of the older generation extended when they talked about asylum seekers themselves. Concerns such as the prioritization of asylum seekers over native citizens, particular when they talked about the housing crisis. This view of this age group aligns with the theory of Pettigrew (1998) on intergroup relation, where he talks about that there were 4 key conditions if there was positive effect and he later added one which was that the contact situation must have friendship potential. But if the older generation only sees them as people that steal away their houses and criminality. This key condition cannot be met which results in a decrease of trust which you can see with this age group.

Adding to this, it was notably clear that the older generation were more frequently engaged with the traditional news media. Which resulted in a better understanding of the whole situation, but often resulted in a more critical perspective because they saw more negative and positive developments of the government. And on the other side the younger generation often looked at the news sporadically, or looked at social media focused news like Instagram news sites.

When comparing the two age groups it becomes clear that both of the groups find that transparency and fairness are 2 key factors that play a role on their trust in the government. However the differences between these two groups is their priorities. While the younger generation often focus more on the inclusion of asylum seekers and the way the government communicates with them. the older generation often appear more focused on the consistency and openness of the actions of the government, and also express frustration over the repeated failures the government has made over the last years. These findings that I found confirms the theory of Tom Tyler where he talks about that trust and compliance with the government only increases when people see that authorities acting justly, and that the government needs to tailor their communication strategies to the expectations of different age groups.

If you look at the result that has been found, this research uses the theory of Tom Tyler as an explanatory framework for understanding trust in the government, adding to this this study also contributes to the literature on the generational differences in political views (Eberl et al., 2018; Hitlin et al. ,2022), letting seen that trust is not one straight line but that it can have different contexts and that it can be influenced by the way the government communicates or the media that those generations use,

Reflection on the thesis

While this study provides great insights, this research is limited by its small sample size and its focus on the city of Enschede. Future research should expand to larger sample size across the whole country. And additionally to this a study could be held to capture how trust evolves over time, especially in response to political failures or other developments. Lastly this research was done to find out how the perception of citizens influenced their trust in the government, while there have been made suggestions

to improve this a further research can be held to look at which things can make the trust in the government better.

These finding of this research are especially relevant in the light of the 2025 Dutch parliamentary elections and the fall of the tweede kamer cabinet that came after it. the coalition of the tweede kamer collapsed, because of the PVV's withdrawal over the disagreements about the asylum policies. Which directly reflects point like the fairness and transparency were this research talked about.

This moment of the fall of the cabinet can have had an influence on the interviews that were conducted in this research. Since the asylum seeker case was a big topic in the media at this time, people were likely more sceptical and critical to the government at this time. Which made the citizens likely more distrustful in the government. And because the interviews took place shortly before and after the fall of the cabinet, the participant of the interviews were likely to have a other meaning when they were for example been interviewed when their was no fall. And this is important to consider when looking at the results, but it also shows that it is important to consider current events when studying the view of people.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research has shown that the perceptions of fairness and transparency in asylum seekers and their policies have an significant influence on the trust in the government.. trust is not a straightforward concept, this is because it is shaped by all sorts of factors such as the communication of government, media consumptions and of course generational differences. While the younger generation often focuses on inclusion and fairness,, and the use of newer media. The older generation has more focus on clarity and consistency and the use of traditional media. Despite these differences, both age groups has the same ideas that transparency and fairness are essential to build and maintain trust in the government.

The findings has found out that trust is not only a reaction to the outcomes of the government but also is deeply rooted in how these policies are communicated and perceived. This let you see the importance of tailoring communication strategies to different age groups, and making sure that you address their own unique concerns and preferences. And by doing this, the government can't only rebuild public trust but also strengthen their legitimacy and improve the effectiveness of their policies and the communication.

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Appendix

- A. During the preparation of this work the author used ChatGPT, and Grammarly in order to Brainstorm, find information, summarized articles and check for grammar and spelling. After using this tool/service, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the work.

B. Interview vragen

Interview vragen

Voordat we beginnen met dit interview wil ik u graag wat meer informatie geven over dit interview. Dit interview is deel van mijn onderzoeksopdracht voor mijns thesis and de universiteit van Twente. En het doel van dit onderzoek is om te begrijpen hoe de percepties van mensen naar asielzoekers hun vertrouwen in de overheid kunnen beïnvloeden. Ik wil graag van te voren zeggen bedankt dat u wilt deelnemen, maar dat u op elk moment vragen mag overslaan of stoppen met het interview. Daarnaast worden alle antwoorden anoniem behandeld en uw naam en persoonlijke gegevens worden niet gedeeld. Nou zoals u al waarschijnlijk weet en anders een reminder dit interview zou rond de 30 tot 45 minuten duren en graag zou ik dit interview willen opnemen, daarvoor is mijn vraag gaat u hiermee akkoord?

Nou nogmaals bedankt dat u wilt deelnemen aan mijn onderzoek, vandaag ga ik enkele vragen stellen over uw mening over asielzoekers, de kennis van het asielbeleid en het vertrouwen in de overheid. Hierbij zijn er natuurlijk geen goede of foute antwoorden en ben ik geniterreseerd in uw eerlijke mening en ervaringen. Als de vragen wilt overslaan of een pauze wilt nemen, kan dat natuurlijk ook en mag u dat aangeven. Nou denk dat dan alles duidelijk is en zullen we dan beginnen?

Vragen:

achtergrond

1. Kunt u iets over uzelf vertellen? (Leeftijd, beroep/opleiding, hoelang u al in Enschede woont?)

Voorkennis:

2. Hoe is uw informatie rondom asielzoekers en de wetten erom heen (bijv, spreidingswetten of opvangwetten), en volgt u dit weleens?

Vertrouwen in overheid

3. Heeft u vertrouwen in de overheid, en zou u dit kunnen beoordelen op een schaal van 1 tot 10.
4. Wat vindt u van de transparantie van de overheid met betrekking tot asielzoekers en het beleid?
5. Denkt u dat de overheid eerlijk is over zijn successen maar ook de fouten in het asielbeleid

6. In hoeverre denkt u dat de overheid luistert naar U als het gaat om uw behoeften en zorgen, vooral als het gaat om het asielbeleid
7. Heeft uw vertrouwen in de overheid weleens toe- of afgenomen vanwege het asielbeleid? Kunt u een voorbeeld geven?
8. Wat zou de overheid volgens u moeten verbeteren aan de manier waarop ze communiceert of beleid uitvoert rondom asielzoekers?
9. Hoe is uw vertrouwen veranderd omtrent de asielwetten in Enschede

Vragen over beleid

10. Hoe kijkt u tegen asielzoekers aan?
11. Heeft u vertrouwen in de wijze waarop de overheid asielzoekers opvangt?
12. Hoe goed voelt u zich geïnformeerd over de situatie van asielzoekers in Nederland/Enschede?
13. Vind u dat de overheid eerlijk en transparant communiceert over het asielbeleid?
14. Wat betekent 'eerlijk beleid' voor u als het gaat om asielzoekers? Waar moet het beleid aan voldoen om als eerlijk te worden gezien?
15. Hoe beoordeeld u het beleid van de overheid, op een schaal van 1 tot 10 als het gaat om prestaties, en dingen die ze hebben bereikt?

Media en beeldvorming

16. Volgt u vaak de media, als het gaat om zaken zoals het asielbeleid en de asielzoekers?
17. Via welke media hoort u meestal iets over asielzoekers? (Bijv. Tubantia, NOS, Facebook etc.
18. Hoe worden asielzoekers in uw ogen meestal neergezet in de media?
19. Heeft u wel eens gemerkt dat bepaalde nieuwsberichten uw mening over asielzoekers of het asielbeleid hebben beïnvloed?

Contact met asielzoekers

20. Heeft u persoonlijk contact gehad met asielzoekers of mensen met mensen die gevlucht zijn ? Wat voor indruk heeft dat op u gemaakt?
21. Heeft u vaak contact met asielzoekers of vluchtelingen, en zo ja waar zijn deze contacten.

Social capital stuk

22. Bent u actief in de buurt of in maatschappelijke activiteiten, bijvoorbeeld vrijwilligerswerk?
23. Heeft u ervaring met organisaties die iets doen voor of met asielzoekers(buddy to buddy) of (Huminitas enschede)?
24. Heeft u vertrouwen in de mensen die in uw wijk wonen?

afsluitend stuk

25. Zijn er dingen die u nog kwijt wilt over dit onderwerp?

26. Heeft u suggesties voor wat de overheid of de media beter zou kunnen doen op dit gebied?

Interview Questions

Introduction

Before we begin this interview, I would like to give you a bit more information. This interview is part of my research project for my thesis at the University of Twente. The goal of this research is to understand how people's perceptions of asylum seekers can influence their trust in the government.

First of all, thank you very much for your willingness to participate. Please keep in mind that you can skip any question or stop the interview at any moment. All your answers will be treated anonymously, and your name and personal information will not be shared.

As you probably already know—or just as a reminder—this interview will take around 30 to 45 minutes. I would also like to record the interview. May I ask if you agree with that?

Once again, thank you for participating in my research. Today, I will ask you some questions about your opinion on asylum seekers, your knowledge of asylum policy, and your trust in the government. Of course, there are no right or wrong answers—I am interested in your honest opinions and experiences. If you want to skip a question or take a break, that is completely fine. I believe everything is clear now, shall we begin?

Questions

Background

1. Can you tell me a bit about yourself? (Age, profession/education, how long have you lived in Enschede?)

Prior Knowledge

2. What is your level of knowledge regarding asylum seekers and the laws surrounding them (for example, the distribution or reception laws)? Do you follow these topics?

Trust in Government

3. Do you have trust in the government, and could you rate it on a scale from 1 to 10?
4. What is your opinion on the transparency of the government regarding asylum seekers and its policies?
5. Do you think the government is honest about both the successes and the failures of its asylum policy?
6. To what extent do you think the government listens to **you**, especially regarding your needs and concerns about asylum policy?
7. Has your trust in the government ever increased or decreased because of asylum policy? Can you give an example?

8. In your opinion, what should the government improve in how it communicates or carries out asylum policy?
9. How has your trust changed regarding asylum-related laws in Enschede?

Questions About Policy

10. What is your general view on asylum seekers?
11. Do you trust the way the government receives and houses asylum seekers?
12. How well-informed do you feel about the situation of asylum seekers in the Netherlands/Enschede?
13. Do you think the government communicates honestly and transparently about asylum policy?
14. What does "fair policy" mean to you when it comes to asylum seekers? What must the policy include to be considered fair?
15. How would you rate the government's asylum policy in terms of performance and achievements, on a scale from 1 to 10?

Media and Representation

16. Do you often follow media coverage about topics like asylum policy and asylum seekers?
17. Through which media do you usually hear about asylum seekers? (e.g., Tubantia, NOS, Facebook, etc.)
18. In your opinion, how are asylum seekers generally portrayed in the media?
19. Have you ever noticed that certain news stories influenced your opinion about asylum seekers or asylum policy?

Contact with Asylum Seekers

20. Have you had personal contact with asylum seekers or people who have fled their country? What kind of impression did that leave on you?
21. Do you often have contact with asylum seekers or refugees? If so, in what context?

Social Capital Section

22. Are you active in your neighborhood or involved in social activities, such as volunteer work?
23. Do you have experience with organizations that do something for or with asylum seekers (such as Buddy to Buddy or Humanitas Enschede)?
24. Do you trust the people who live in your neighborhood?

Closing Section

25. Is there anything else you would like to share about this topic?
26. Do you have suggestions for what the government or the media could do better in this area?

Appendix C

Interview Results Summary Table						
Factor	Younger generation			Older generation		
	Participant 1 (23)	Participant 2 (21)	Participant 3 (21)	Participant 1 (58)	Participant 2 (57)	Participant F (56)
Trust in Government	Moderate trust (5/10) sees government as somewhat achieving things.	Low trust (3/10), because of the fall of the cabinet.	High trust (9/10), doesn't feel distrust towards them.	moderate trust (6/10), Trust is not that high, but because they do things that the previous cabinet didn't it is a 6.	Low trust (3/10), he could say his trust in the government is really high because he works there. But it is not the case.	Moderate Trust (6/10), does think that the government is doing good things but also bad things
Transparency	Thinks that the government could be more transparent.	Is not sure, but I think it's published and you can read about it yourself.	Thinks that the transparency could be better, especially because there is a bias in the age group.	Finds that they are not really transparent, but he thinks it comes because they need to make big decisions.	Finds it scandalous, this is because he heard things earlier on the news about his own job, then from his boss.	Find the transparency transparent and even rated it a 1. But because of the fall of the cabinet.
Fairness of Policy	Feels that they think on short-term basis, and that they do not see the differences in type asylum seekers.	Don't think they're always honest, but they admit some mistakes. But she thinks also that they hide certain things	Sees that it is not going well everywhere, but for the Netherlands he thinks they are doing well.	Thinks that the policies are not always fair, and loves to see it changed.	He find that the faults of the government are covered up, and thinks the government does not listen to his meanings.	She finds the policy to be not that great, mainly because it does not achieve results and does not address her needs.
Perceptions of Asylum Seekers	we have it good, so the city must take good care of refugees.	Finds it sad that they have to flee, but there is also a housing shortage. So the people who get here should also do something back	Finds it good that we offer shelter for them, but finds that sometimes they make the conditions too good for them.	Has concerns about asylum seekers and thinks that the Netherlands is full, and instead, they need to address this problem in their own country.	Finds that good citizens stay in their own country, and this find asylum seekers not welcome.	She find that real asylum seekers that need shelter are welcome to the Netherlands, however people who do bad things or do not want to integrate need to stay away.
Media Influence	Mostly gets info via Instagram, and sees the news is neutral.	Mostly gets info from the NOS, but sometimes also from Instagram. And sees asylum seekers as people who got it difficult	Watches some news on the television, but mainly gets his news from social media. And sees bad news about for example terrorism.	Only gets his news from traditional sources, and strictly watches the 6 o'clock news every day.	Gets his news from local newspapers and tv, and not social media. And sees that asylum seekers are presented as people in need.	She gets her news from the NOS, but also local newspapers and talk shows on TV. And sees that the news is mainly positive.
Social Capital	Not active in community, but finds these organisations a great option	Has volunteered once and enjoyed it, but doesn't have time to do it now.	Did do some volunteering, but in his previous municipality. But finds it great initiatives.	Does not participate in his community, and finds the organisations a great idea but only if they are one big organisation.	did do no volunteering, but spoke to several asylum seekers and find organisations who help them great.	Does not really cooperate in her community, but finds the initiatives of organisation a great way to integrate and help asylum seekers.

This table gives a good summary of the answers of the interviews from the participants from both age groups, which were the younger generation (18 till 30) and the older generation (50 till 70). The interview had questions based on all sorts of different views but the main factors were: trust in the government, transparency, fairness of policy, perception of asylum seekers, media influence and social capital.

The differences between each participant are explained in the research questions in the main document, and thus will not be explained here. This table is mainly to summarise each of the participants their answers and to get a clear overview of how the people thought about this subject.