

**Risky Business:
Uncertainty, Trust, and Domestic Support for Global Engagement**

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Abstract

This study proposes a novel theory explaining changing levels of public support for global engagement in the US. Unlike theories based on domestic opportunity costs, we propose that the key impediment to favoring international engagement is the higher level of trust that such involvement demands, due to the perceived risk and uncertainty the public associates with international involvement. In contrast to past work relying on cross-sectional predictors of isolationism or internationalism, we focus on what causes support for international engagement to wax and wane over time within individuals. Using eight waves of representative national probability panel data fielded over six years, we find that predictors of increasing/decreasing support for international engagement differ from what cross-sectional models have suggested. We find little evidence that changes in perceptions of personal or collective economic circumstances directly drive change over time in support for internationalism. Instead, changing levels of trust—in generalized others, in government, and in those of different races and ethnicities—are central to understanding Americans’ willingness to engage in international cooperation. Nonetheless, economic perceptions affect support for global engagement indirectly by influencing levels of trust in government.

Increasing globalization has produced tremendous uncertainty for populations around the world. Unlike events that are familiar and close to home, ordinary citizens lack a sense of control over international affairs. Psychologists suggest that foreign entities are perceived to be inherently riskier because they are further away and less familiar; this makes them less trusted as a result (Williams and Bargh 2008). Given higher perceptions of risk with international versus domestic affairs, why are Americans more supportive of cooperative international engagement at some times than at others?

To date, the most prominent explanations have been based on the perceived opportunity costs of engagement (e.g., Nincic 1997). The conventional view has been that during economic downturns, the public supports focusing their country's resources on domestic concerns. Turning inward is thus a protective response to economic hard times. Conversely, when economic times are good, citizens feel less stressed and in need, whether individually or collectively, and therefore become more willing to support international engagement.

In this study we present an alternative theory that does not contradict that conventional wisdom so much as it explains and expands upon it to incorporate a wider assortment of domestic conditions that are relevant to whether the public supports global engagement, beyond economic conditions alone. Some accounts have suggested a relationship between domestic national economic conditions (or perceptions thereof) and internationalist attitudes (Kertzer 2013), while others have maintained that economic self-interest drives support for global engagement (Fordham 2008). Still others argue that the public actively considers the opportunity

costs of international engagement, balancing the demands of the international security environment with domestic priorities (Nincic 1997). These theories suggest that domestic affairs affect citizens' attitudes toward international engagement. A more parsimonious theory suggests that support for internationalism is driven, in part, by co-partisanship with the president (Urbatsch 2010).

The correlates of support for internationalism are well-known, but the conclusions scholars have drawn from them have been somewhat tentative because, with few exceptions, this work relies almost exclusively on cross-sectional analyses or repeated cross-sectional time series. This leaves open the question of whether *changes* in one or more of the proposed drivers of support for global engagement would, in fact, lead to *changes* in internationalist sentiment, as a true causal interpretation implies.

The causes of fluctuations in internationalist sentiment are important to understand, particularly during a time period when the patterns of partisan support for international engagement no longer seem predictable. The ebb and flow of the American public's isolationism versus internationalism has important implications for our understanding of the domestic politics of foreign policy (Caspary 1970, Holsti 1992, Herrmann, Tetlock, and Visser 1999, Baum and Potter 2008), for the legitimacy of international institutions and cooperation (Mansfield and Mutz 2009, Frieden 2020, Dellmuth and Tallberg 2023), and for how publics constrain the policy choices of their leaders (Knecht and Weatherford 2006, Kertzer and Zeitzoff 2017).

A Trust-based Theory of International Engagement

Our theory of domestic influence on support for international engagement centers on trust. The cluster of previously documented correlates of isolationism includes closely related

characteristics such as risk aversion, anxiety, uncertainty and lack of control. Levels of trust are thus likely to be critical to countering the uncertainties surrounding global engagement.

Perceived risk and a sense of lack of control over distant events all produce anxiety. Those with a high need for certainty or strong locus of control are unlikely to support international involvement (Ehrlich and Maestas 2010; Harell et al. 2017). Because all things international seem distant and rife with risk, high levels of trust are necessary to counter citizens' sense of vulnerability since they do not feel the same level of control over distant events as they do events close to home. To be affected by distant, unfamiliar phenomena, developments that seem far beyond one's immediate environment or control, is unnerving. A well-documented reaction to uncertainty, distrust and fear of the unknown is to withdraw. This introversion can be quite literal in the case of citizens who "turn inward" and oppose international involvement.

Importantly, our theory suggests that the source of anxiety need not be personal or economic in nature, nor does it need to emanate from events overseas. Instead, people may "hunker down" in response to generalized anxiety, fear, or perceived threats. For example, even among those who are personally unaffected by economic downturns, recessions create anxiety because people sense their lack of control over the economy (Kalgaard 2009; Stokes 2012; Seib 2010). Both the Great Depression and Great Recession decreased risk-taking behaviors, independent of these events' personal impact (Mansfield et al. 2016). Terrorist acts and natural disasters have similar effects, encouraging greater risk-aversion even among those who were personally unaffected (Cassar et al. 2015; Huddy and Feldman 2011). Even experimentally-induced anxiety such as having experimental subjects watch fictional horror films can cause people to turn inward and become more risk-averse (Guiso et al. 2018; Renshon et al. 2015).

Theories of emotional appraisal in psychology suggest that anxiety is due to the lack of a sense of control over future events (Lerner and Keltner 2000, 2001). Anxiety about the mere prospect of some undesirable outcome may be enough to trigger turning inward in an isolationist direction, and thus away from international affairs. Consistent with this prediction, personality traits such as a chronic need for security and certainty are known to increase protectionist preferences (Johnston 2013). Our trust-based theory extends this general insight to over-time fluctuations in an individual's sense of uncertainty and generalized anxiety. Trust serves to counter-balance the uncertainty and unfamiliarity of international affairs, thus facilitating support for international involvement..

We hypothesize that fluctuations in a variety of different kinds of trust will explain changes over time in support for international engagement. High levels of trust offset the sense of a lack of control that people feel about international affairs and foreign others. Thus, as people's levels of trust increase/decrease, they should become more/less supportive of non-military international engagement. Higher levels of trust should facilitate less suspiciousness of the motives of actors in both the national and international community.

In one sense, our argument builds on some past research showing that *international* trust is a robust predictor of support for international engagement (Brewer et al. 2004). But our theory differs in arguing that *domestic* trust is also central to international engagement. It is not surprising that international trust predicts support for international engagement. But it is difficult, based on cross-sectional evidence, to determine whether isolationist attitudes lead to international distrust, and/or vice-versa.

Our theory focuses strictly on *domestic* targets of trust as engines of a desire for international involvement. Americans have far greater familiarity with domestic as opposed to

international targets of trust and distrust. A far smaller contingent of citizens follows international affairs closely (Mitchell et al. 2018). The varieties of domestic trust that we examine include increasing/decreasing levels of trust in other people, that is, social trust; trust in the domestic US government; and trust in domestic co-nationals of different races and ethnicities. All of these forms of trust are predicted to cause changes in support for global engagement.

The logic of our theory is straightforward, and numerous related findings are suggestive of it, even though they do not examine this exact thesis. For example, Americans are especially likely to oppose international engagement with countries perceived to be different from their own (Mutz 2021b; Chen, Pevehouse, and Powers 2023; Powers and Renshon 2024), just as they often distrust domestic outgroup members because they seem different from themselves. Foreign people and places simultaneously differ from Americans on many characteristics that reduce their trust.

Notably, an advantage of our trust-based theory is that it does not require citizens to have an extensive understanding of international relationships or economic knowledge in order to form views on international engagement. In this respect, it is more plausible than some other theories. It simply requires that citizens have a sense of trust or distrust toward others in their *domestic* environment. We test this overall argument using data from an original eight-wave panel study of American citizens.

Consistent with our general argument, we find evidence at the individual-level that changes over time in government trust, attitudes toward outgroups, and social trust all drive changes over time in individual support for global engagement. In contrast to past work, we find that changes in co-partisanship with the president have no discernable direct effect on support for

global engagement after taking into account changes in trust in government. Even more strikingly, we find only limited evidence that perceptions of economic conditions directly alter support for global engagement. With few minor exceptions, our findings with respect to economic perceptions are contrary to the conventional wisdom. Nonetheless, we find strong and consistent evidence that economic factors impact trust in government, and thus have an *indirect* impact on isolationism versus internationalism. Changes in personal economic circumstances, perceptions of change in national economic conditions, and changes in copartisanship with the president all drive changes in trust in government in the predicted directions. These findings suggest a weaker, more indirect role for economics and inparty status in fostering support for global engagement.

Given that previous studies have seldom combined the examination of economics with other influences, our theory and evidence serve to unify the disparate empirical findings of past work. We reveal these factors to be drivers of a common underlying trust mechanism which, in turn, drives support for global engagement. These results also complement those of a wide range of previous research showing that trust shapes cooperation among individuals, firms, and nations and so has significant implications for outcomes in world affairs (Knack and Keefer 1997, Kydd 2007, Hoffman 2006).

The Opportunity Costs of Global Engagement

Cross-sectional variation in foreign policy attitudes is reliably predicted by a host of individual characteristics. Despite earlier arguments to the contrary (e.g., Almond 1950. See Holsti 1992 for a summary of early work on foreign policy attitudes), the public is now believed to respond to new information about world events in ways that are consistent with their pre-

existing beliefs (Page and Shapiro 1992, Jentleson 1992, Herrman, Tetlock and Visser 1999, Rathbun et al. 2016). However, most of this work does not speak to what causes support for international engagement to increase or decrease over time.

Economic theories of isolationism versus internationalism are the important exception to this claim. Improving domestic economic conditions have been argued to boost support for international engagement. The high salience of economic conditions among the public and the long-documented link between presidential voting and the economy (Fiorina 1981; Anderson 2007) is argued to constrain support for internationalism. Pairing the salience of economic conditions with the potential costs associated with an activist foreign policy, this line of argument assumes a positive correlation between economic prosperity (or perceptions thereof) and foreign policy extroversion (Nincic 1997). The public, the argument goes, believes that the “government has a finite store of resources and attention to devote to policy challenges and that...decision makers focus on foreign problems at the expense of domestic needs” (Nincic 1997, 599).

As an extension of the domestic opportunity costs argument, the economic determinants of internationalism have also been recast as part of a broader model of foreign policy “mood” (Kertzer 2013). From this perspective, isolationist sentiment is viewed as a “multilevel phenomenon” in which contextual factors—including macroeconomic conditions—and individual level characteristics—including perceptions of the economy—jointly shape the public’s willingness to engage internationally. This mood-based theory argues that individual-level perceptions that the economy is doing poorly will increase isolationist sentiment even if the economy is, in fact, doing well. But when actual economic conditions sour, individual-level perceptions lose their purchase and macroeconomic fundamentals drive sentiment instead

(Kertzer 2013). Support for this argument is based on merging opinions from a question included in 14 cross-sectional waves of the ANES with data on domestic economic conditions. Using completely different data, Popkin and Dimock (2000) also show that perceptions that the national economy is doing poorly are correlated with opposition to global engagement. Thus, past evidence suggests that changes in economic conditions, whether perceived or actual, and whether personal or collective, should influence support for global engagement. We include four hypotheses testing this assumption:

Perceived National Economic Conditions Hypothesis: Perceived improvement (deterioration) in the national economy should increase (decrease) support for global engagement.

Perceived Personal Financial Conditions Hypothesis: Perceived improvement (deterioration) in one's family finances should increase (decrease) support for global engagement.

Personal Unemployment Hypothesis: Gaining (losing) a job should increase (decrease) support for global engagement.

Personal Income Hypothesis: Those with incomes increasing at a rate that is faster (slower) than average should increase (decrease) their support for global engagement.

Distrust-Based Hypotheses about Global Engagement

Thus far we have offered a set of expectations predicted by previous work. We now turn to hypotheses emanating from our trust-based theory of support for global involvement. While international engagement almost certainly entails opportunity costs, it is unclear how salient these trade-offs are in the eyes of the public. We suspect that the public lacks the specialized

knowledge to accurately assess a given leader's foreign (or even domestic) policy agenda, its opportunity costs, or the leader's ability to competently pursue that agenda. Instead, voters may fall back on less precise but more salient heuristics such as the relative trustworthiness of government at the time.

Some past work speaks directly to the likely importance of government trust. Using repeated cross-sections from the ANES, Urbatsch (2010) shows that co-partisans of the president are more likely to endorse internationalism (see also, Kertzer 2014). Trust in government and in those individuals leading the government is important when considering willingness to engage abroad. Those who trust their leaders are more likely to support potentially risky international engagement. Given that voters view presidents from the outparty to be less trustworthy, we anticipate that they will become less supportive of foreign engagement when they become out-partisans due to a change in the party in power, and more supportive when they become co-partisans of the president:

Co-partisanship Hypothesis: Individuals should be increasingly (decreasingly) willing to engage internationally when their own political party takes (loses) the presidency.

Trust in government, presidential approval, and presidential feeling thermometers have all been found to be positively correlated with internationalist sentiment in analyses of repeated ANES cross-sectional data (Urbatsch 2010). However, when a president of one's own party takes over, a co-partisan's trust in government increases, thus making government trust and inparty status difficult to differentiate. As Urbatsch (2010: 472) explains, isolationism "may be an expression of distrust in the national government's competence to prosecute a foreign policy in the national interest." Popkin and Dimock (2000: 218) make this case more explicitly,

arguing, “[t]he extent to which people trust their government and the people around them shapes their predispositions about foreign affairs. The importance of government trust follows logically....” Using cross-sectional data, they show that trust in government and generalized social trust are both correlated with internationalism. This work suggests that government trust should be a fundamental driver of change in support for global engagement:

Government Trust Hypothesis: As levels of government trust increase (decrease), individuals will become more (less) supportive of global engagement.

As noted, however, becoming an inparty member not only increases government trust, it also predicts more positive evaluations of the national economy and of one’s own personal finances as well (Mutz 2021a), making evidence of these separate hypotheses difficult to differentiate with cross-sectional data. To circumvent these issues, we use fixed effects panel analyses to avoid collinearity problems in our individual-level, over-time analyses.

As noted above, beliefs about the average trustworthiness of others whom one does not know, that is, “generalized social trust,” also has been hypothesized to affect foreign policy attitudes (Popkin and Dimock 2000). In other words, “[w]hen making choices in the often ambiguous and confusing domain of foreign affairs, citizens can still turn to their fundamental beliefs about human nature.... Respondents with cynical beliefs about human nature were significantly more likely to endorse isolationism than were respondents with trusting beliefs about human nature” (Brewer and Steenbergen 2002: 40):

Generalized Social Trust hypothesis: As levels of social trust increase (decrease), people will become more (less) supportive of global engagement.

In addition to distrust of generalized others, we hypothesize that those who distrust racial and ethnic outgroup members should be especially likely to oppose international engagement. Even though these are attitudes about *domestic* “others,” we hypothesize that domestic inter-racial distrust may transfer to distrust of foreigners. Americans favor trade more with nations that are similar to the US, countries that share the US standard of living, hold similar values, and so forth (Mutz 2021a; Chen, Pevehouse, and Powers 2023). Since international engagement implies ongoing interaction with foreign entities, many of whom are of other races and ethnicities, it stands to reason that people’s attitudes toward domestic “others,” that is, anyone unlike their own ingroup, may also influence people’s willingness to engage internationally (Mutz, Mansfield and Kim 2021; Renshon and Powers 2024). To the extent that a person of any race or ethnicity feels strong outgroup resentment—even when the outgroups are domestic—they should be less likely to favor international engagement. This argument is also consistent with evidence that Americans are willing to pay more to purchase otherwise identical goods from countries that are racially and culturally similar to the United States (Bankert, Sheagley, and Powers 2022; Mutz 2021). This tendency is especially strong for individuals who exhibit high levels of ethnocentrism.

Outgroup Resentment Hypothesis: To the extent that people see their own racial/ethnic ingroup as experiencing greater (less) discrimination than other racial groups, they will be less (more) supportive of international engagement. Further, increasing levels of outgroup resentment should be especially influential when an individual simultaneously becomes a member of the outparty, thus producing a magnified sense of loss of control.

The Outgroup Resentment Hypothesis suggests that it does not matter which domestic group one counts as one's ingroup, so long as they feel outgroup resentment. But it is also possible that opposition to helping American minorities is unique in its implications for internationalism. Those who oppose the US government helping domestic minorities may see foreign involvement in similarly negative terms, that is, as a handout to undeserving others. For this reason, we hypothesized that changing levels of support for domestic minorities could also influence support for global engagement:

Domestic Aid for Minorities Hypothesis: As levels of support for helping domestic minorities increase (decrease), Americans will become more (less) supportive of global engagement.

Finally, our trust-based theory of support for international engagement also predicts potential heterogeneity in what drives change over time in support for US involvement overseas. One of the central fault lines for trust in the contemporary US is along racial lines. Like foreigners, domestic minorities are often treated as outsiders. Based on related research, we suggest that they may view international involvement through a different lens as a result. For example, although Americans of all races and ethnicities prefer working for domestic rather than international firms, Blacks rate foreign firms as more attractive to work for than whites do (Newbury, Gardberg and Belkin 2006). Hispanics are likewise more likely than whites to prefer working for international firms. Some suggest that this pattern occurs because minorities are better at adapting to multicultural contexts (Chattopadhyay 1999). But a similar pattern has been demonstrated in support for international trade, with minorities in the US more supportive of

trading with other countries than whites are, even after controlling for other differences (Mutz, Mansfield and Kim 2021).

Minorities may be less averse to all things international, perhaps because they feel themselves to be on the fringes of “foreignness” from the perspective of whites within the US. Even though they are co-nationals, minority Americans are often “othered” by whites, meaning that they are deemed less American (Theiss-Morse 2009). One excellent example was the controversy over President Obama’s birth certificate, and whether he was a “true” American. Further, President Trump suggested that Muslim-American congresswoman Ilhan Omar was an agent of a foreign power and should “go back” to the “crime infested place” she came from (Rogers and Fandos 2019). The not-so-subtle implications of such statements are that white Christians are the “true” Americans, while minorities do not fully belong.

This difference in perspective is hypothesized to change minorities’ calculus of support for internationalism, particularly with respect to the impact of change over time in outgroup resentment and support for domestic aid for minorities. Because an individual’s race remains stable over time and cannot predict change in levels of internationalism, our anticipated interactions pertain to how whites and minorities weigh various considerations differently in our model. Historically, Blacks in the US have seen themselves as “colored cosmopolitans;” that is, they have actively expressed solidarity with those overseas in confronting domestic and international racisms (Slate 2012, 2015). For example, during the McCarthy era, Black activist and entertainer Paul Robeson suggested to African-Americans that “to think and act across borders was a patriotic duty” (Grant 2023: 340). Although one can also find some consideration of domestic opportunity costs among minorities, advocating liberation across borders was more common (Kelley 1999). As the executive director of the Council on African Affairs put it,

“There are some who may say that we have enough to do in cleaning our own backyard; it is perhaps not quite as ugly as South Africa’s but still surely bad enough” (Hunton 1953: 42). Significantly, Black opinion leaders in the US viewed racism within a larger global context, while foreigners and Blacks were viewed as interchangeably suspicious to many whites (Burden-Stelly 2017).

Based on this logic, we expected heterogeneity in what causes minorities and whites to change their views on international engagement over time. If economic pressures drive isolationism, then one would expect economic downturns to have an especially strong impact on minorities, who tend to be more economically vulnerable than whites. The trust-based theory, in contrast, would predict that whites should be more influenced by attitudes toward minorities and outgroup resentment than would minorities. Minorities in the US view whites as a higher-status, dominant group, while whites view minorities far less positively than themselves (Brewer 2007, Kinder and Kam 2009). According to Tajfel (1982), only dominant groups are expected to demonstrate outgroup prejudice. Thus, we predicted that increases/decreases in support for helping domestic US minorities would be linked to increases/decreases over time in levels of white support for international engagement to a greater extent than it would predict minorities’ changing support for international engagement:

Domestic Aid for Minorities by White Racial Status: As an individual’s support for domestic aid for American minorities increases (decreases), whites will be influenced toward greater (lesser) support for international engagement to a greater extent than minorities.

Consistent with the idea that white Americans have a different calculus from minorities with respect to what drives their support for overseas involvement, we further hypothesized that outgroup resentment would be an especially important driver of isolationist views among whites in the US, but less so among minorities, since they are more likely to link their own struggles to international ones, and to view racism in more of a global context:

Outgroup Resentment by White Racial Status: As levels of outgroup resentment increase (decrease) over time, whites will become less (more) supportive of global engagement to a greater degree than minorities will as a result of changing levels of outgroup resentment.

To reiterate, our focus in this study is on the *domestic* sources of support for global engagement. None of our hypotheses involves attitudes toward anything international as an independent variable; what we have highlighted are all domestic circumstances that drive isolationist versus internationalist attitudes. In addition, our focus is strictly on dynamics rather than pre-existing differences; in other words, we ask why support for global engagement waxes and wanes over time, regardless of at what level it starts. Since numerous politicians and pundits claim the American public has recently taken an isolationist turn, it seems imperative to know what kinds of changes in society can lead to the desire to turn inward in American foreign policy.

Research Design

Drawing on the extensive cross-sectional literature on correlates of support for global engagement, we have outlined numerous theoretical expectations for our longitudinal analyses. While cross-sectional correlates are often assumed to be the causes of change in internationalism,

data limitations have meant that to date these assumptions have been just that. Using panel data, this study provides an opportunity to establish a stronger causal evidentiary basis for our theories of internationalist sentiment than previously possible. We evaluate whether individual-level *change* in each of our independent variables of interest coincides with individual-level *change* in support for global engagement in the hypothesized directions.

Because our central purpose is to understand the underlying causes of change over time in individual support for international engagement, we draw on a large probability sample of Americans that has been re-interviewed eight times over a six-year period. By using individual and survey wave fixed effects regressions, we isolate the impact of change over time in the independent variables on change over time in levels of support for global engagement within those same individuals. Panel data methods are especially well suited to distinguish causes from correlates since they omit the need for extensive controls for stable individual differences, making model specification issues far less problematic (Vaisey and Miles 2017). Further, by incorporating wave fixed effects, we control for the average impact of all other changes over time on support for internationalism.

Beginning in October 2016, before Obama left office, and continuing through October 2022, shortly before the midterm elections during the Biden administration, the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago interviewed more than 3,000 respondents at each of eight different points in time. All respondents were selected for participation using address-based probability sampling. Appendix A shows the dates of each wave of interviews, along with the corresponding sample size collected at each wave. Previous participants were prioritized for inclusion with each new panel wave, but new respondents also were added to each wave to offset panel attrition. Since fixed effects analyses do not demand equal spacing of all panel waves, nor

do they require that all variables be non-missing across all waves, this research design was ideal for purposes of maintaining a high level of representativeness in the sample over time.

The dependent variable, *Support for International Engagement*, was measured using an index of five survey questions. These items included questions such as “It is essential for the United States to work with other nations to solve problems, such as overpopulation, hunger, and pollution” (agree), and “It will be best for the future of the country if we stay out of world affairs” (disagree). Appendix B includes survey wording for all 5 items comprising the index. These measures have been used by previous scholars to tap internationalism-isolationism (Maggiotto and Wittkopf 1981; Wittkopf and Maggiotto 1983; Herrmann, Tetlock, and Diascro 2001). They combine to form an internally consistent index, with Cronbach’s alphas ranging from .74 to .81 across the eight waves (see Appendix C for details). Importantly, these items are not asking specifically about *economic* isolationism, but rather focus on general attitudes toward US involvement abroad.

Given the availability of three or more waves of panel data, it was also possible to assess the reliability of these measures using a more exacting standard than internal consistency, an approach that is capable of distinguishing stability over time from the reliability of measurement (see Heise 1969; Alwin 2007). Using each three consecutive waves of panel data, we evaluated the extent to which the index of International Engagement was subject to measurement error. As shown in Appendix C, the Heise reliabilities for this index ranged from .72 to .77 over the eight waves, indicating a relatively low level of measurement error in tapping this underlying construct.

Our independent variables fell into two general categories. One collection of variables is focused on real or perceived economic conditions. Our second set of predictors taps into several

different dimensions of trust, including government trust and social trust, all well-studied attitudes that may vary over time. We include no control variables for demographic or other stable variables since individuals serve as their own controls in a within-person fixed effects analysis. However, since income and unemployment status can vary over time, they are included in all panel waves.

For economic predictors, we included both perceived national economic conditions and perceptions of one's own family's financial conditions, using the same wording as the American National Election Studies (see Appendix B). We also included a dichotomous variable indicating unemployment status, and an 18-level indicator of household income. These indicators are included in our analyses as time-varying indicators across the eight waves, thus allowing an unprecedented opportunity to examine how fluctuations in real and perceived economic conditions affect change in levels of internationalism versus isolationism.

Our independent variables were measured using numerous multi-item indexes to ensure a high quality of measurement. For purposes of examining whether international engagement is, at root, a function of trust, and that domestic sources of trust influence these views, we included five separate indicators, each of which varied over panel waves. First, using the respondent's party identification in the first wave of data collection, *Inparty Status* was coded 1 when a Republican/Democrat was president and the respondent was a self-identified Republican/Democrat, and 0 when the person was not an inparty member. For partisans, this variable changed when the Obama administration gave way to the Trump administration, as well as when the Trump administration gave way to the Biden administration. Having one's own party in power is hypothesized to make respondents more trusting and confident about US international engagement.

Second, *Government Trust* was tapped with three well-known questions used in the American National Election Studies and General Social Survey. Although these indicators ask about trust in government in general, rather than about specific administrations, they are known to vary by administration. In addition, we included an index comprised of three items tapping *Generalized Social Trust*. This well-studied concept refers to an individual's default level of trust in another person that he or she does not know. Does the person believe that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with strangers?

To operationalize outgroup attitudes, we utilized two indicators. One measure, *Racial Attitudes*, asked the extent to which the respondent thought the US government should do more to help Blacks and other minorities. A second indicator, *Outgroup Resentment*, was constructed from multiple questions asking about the extent to which respondents perceived discrimination against various racial groups, combined with information on their own racial self-classification. For whites, *Outgroup Resentment* represented the extent to which Whites saw themselves as discriminated against *more than* Blacks and Hispanics on average. For Hispanics, it represented the extent to which Hispanics saw themselves as discriminated against *more than* Whites and Blacks on average. For Blacks, *Outgroup Resentment* represented the extent to which Blacks saw themselves as more discriminated against than Whites and Hispanics on average.

All survey measures described above were included in all waves of the survey, and all variables were standardized to range from 0 to 1. As recommended by Mummolo and Peterson (2018), to aid in interpretation of the fixed effects coefficients representing the impact of change in the independent variable on change in the dependent variable, within each analysis, we residualized each of our continuous independent variables after accounting for the wave and individual fixed effects. We use these residualized values to standardize each of our continuous

independent variables. By dividing the continuous independent variables by the standard deviation of its residualized value, the resulting coefficients in our fixed effects models represent the effect of a typical observed change within a unit of the independent variable on the dependent variable after accounting for the wave effects. Because we also standardize our dependent variable using the same method, our coefficients below are estimates of how much of the typical within-respondent observed change in the dependent variable (after accounting for the wave effects) is explained by a typical within-respondent observed change in the independent variables (also after accounting for the wave effects). More precisely, our coefficients are estimates of the effect of a standard deviation of residualized change in each of the independent variables (government trust, social trust, etc.) in terms of standard deviations of residualized change in the dependent variable (internationalism). As Mummolo and Peterson (2018) explain, this approach ensures that we focus attention on the variation in our data that was actually used to estimate the coefficients rather than “extreme counterfactuals” (King and Zeng 2006).

The fixed effects approach prevents us from speaking to the effects of stable individual differences. Variables such as party, gender, and so forth, drop out of fixed effects models altogether since individuals are strictly compared to themselves over time. However, for purposes of making stronger causal inferences using observational data, our approach is ideal because it eliminates all stable individual differences, whether measured or unmeasured, demographic or otherwise, as potentially spurious influences in our models. This allows us to focus on what *changes* support for international engagement over time, regardless of where individuals start out on these measures.

Results

We have argued that change over time in trust, whether in government, in others, or in racial and ethnic outgroups, drives temporal variation in support for global engagement. We test this argument by estimating fixed effects panel models that include traditional economic predictors of internationalism as well as indicators of various kinds of trust that may allay the perceived risk of international involvement. Coefficients can be interpreted as the average effect (across all waves) of change in the independent variable on change in the dependent variable.

Drivers of Change in Support for Global Engagement

How does our trust-based model fare relative to a model grounded in perceptions of economic conditions, whether personal or based on the state of the US economy more generally? Our results in Table 1 suggest relatively weak support for the economic models. In our main model, only changes in one's national economic perceptions have statistically significant effects on support for global engagement. A typical increase in perceptions that the national economy is doing well increases support for global engagement by .018 standard deviations of residualized change ($t=2.06$, $p = .039$). The effect of income is statistically significant but incorrectly signed. Indeed, our results suggest that, if anything, an increased income *reduces* support for global engagement, in contrast to what scholars focusing on the role of economic conditions would predict. The effect of other measures of economic experience or perceptions—personal financial situations or unemployment—were not distinguishable from zero.

In contrast, the results in Table 1 show that increases/decreases in trust in government, social trust, outgroup resentment, and favorability toward helping domestic minorities all drive support for global engagement in the directions hypothesized, and to a much greater extent than the economic variables. The coefficients on our various measures of trust in Table 1 confirm that

trust plays a key role in shaping attitudes towards global engagement. An increase in government trust equivalent to one standard deviation of the average change in government trust between panel waves increases support for global engagement by .048 standard deviations of the residualized change in support for global engagement between waves ($t = 6.11, p < .001$). Similarly, an increase in social trust equal to one standard deviation of the residualized change in social trust between waves results in an increase of .02 standard deviations of the average change in support for global engagement between waves ($t = 2.64, p = .009$).

Table 1. *Drivers of Change in Support for International Engagement, 2016-2022*

	(1)		(2)	
	International engagement Coeff.	t stat.	International engagement Coeff.	t stat.
Nat'l economy doing well	0.018*	2.06	0.018*	2.03
Personal financial situation good	-0.006	-0.69	-0.006	-0.74
Unemployed	-0.016	-0.29	-0.016	-0.29
Income	-0.015*	-2.09	-0.015*	-2.10
Outgroup resentment	-0.043***	-5.87	-0.038***	-4.83
Trust in government	0.048***	6.11	0.048***	6.13
Social trust	0.020**	2.64	0.020**	2.63
Racial attitudes	0.064***	8.66	0.064***	8.66
Inparty	-0.010	-0.28	-0.009	-0.25
Outparty	-0.030	-0.87	0.052	1.05
Outparty*Outgroup resentment			-0.017*	-2.24
Wave 1 (Oct 2016)	Ref.	—	Ref	—
Wave 2 (Aug 2017)	0.178***	4.95	0.172***	4.78
Wave 3 (Oct 2018)	0.322***	9.28	0.316***	9.08
Wave 4 (June 2019)	0.240***	6.85	0.234***	6.66
Wave 5 (Feb 2020)	0.216***	6.16	0.210***	5.95
Wave 6 (Oct 2020)	0.230***	6.28	0.221***	6.03
Wave 7 (Apr 2021)	0.079*	2.20	0.081*	2.27
Wave 8 (Oct 2022)	0.034	0.90	0.036	0.95
Constant	4.725***	58.33	4.702***	57.57
sigma_e	1.104		1.104	
sigma_u	1.617		1.616	
Rho	0.682		0.682	
Observations(n)	24,096		24,096	
Individuals(n)	5,880		5,880	

Note: Coefficients represent the effects of one standard deviation of residualized change in each

*independent variable in terms of standard deviations of residualized change in support for international engagement. * p<0.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001*

Table 1 also illustrates the impact of changing attitudes toward domestic outgroups. We operationalized these attitudes in two ways: outgroup resentment based on the respondent's own racial or ethnic group, and support for government aid to racial and ethnic minorities in general, regardless of the respondent's own group membership. Our results show that those experiencing a decrease in outgroup resentment or an increase in support for government aid to minorities become systematically more supportive of global engagement. The typical realized effects on our global engagement index across waves for outgroup resentment and racial attitudes are -.043 and .064 standard deviations of residualized change in support for global engagement across waves, respectively ($t=5.87$; $p<.001$; $t=8.66$; $p<.001$). These results make it clear that changes in domestic attitudes towards outgroups spill over into international affairs.

Past work suggests that outgroup resentment can be exacerbated by political events such as changes in political leadership that cause respondents to have less of a sense of control. If our theory of outgroup sentiment spillover is correct, we should see the role of outgroup resentment amplified by the loss of political power. We test this hypothesis directly in Model 2 of Table 1. Here we estimate Model 1, but include an interaction term between outparty and outgroup resentment. The results show that for those who are newly becoming members of the outparty, the effect of increase/decreases in outgroup resentment on decreases/increases in support for global engagement is especially strong. Because they are doubly "out" by being both out of control of the White House, and simultaneously increasing in outgroup resentment, these partisans are more likely to reject international involvement.

It is worth noting in Table 1 that we find no apparent role for changes in outparty or inparty status on average; those who move from being a co-partisan of the President to no longer

being a co-partisan of the president are no more or less likely to support global engagement than those who do not experience such a shift, contradicting some previous findings (Urbatsch 2010; Kertzer 2013). As we discuss further in the next section, this appearance of inconsistency may occur because the effects of changes in the party in power operate indirectly, through effects on trust in government. Likewise, economic change looms far larger in understanding internationalism when changes in trust in government are not taken into account.

Trust in Government

Our initial results challenge the conventional wisdom on the drivers of support for global engagement. Past work, using largely cross-sectional research designs, finds a significant role for perceptions of the national economy (e.g., Fordham 2008, Kertzer 2013), as well as for co-partisanship with the president (e.g., Urbatsch 2010). In our analyses we instead find much stronger support for changes in government trust and attitudes towards outgroups.

How do we explain these differences? Past research indicates that government trust is, at least partially, the result of changes in co-partisanship with the president and changes in economic performance. This observation suggests that in past analyses, inparty status and perceptions of a strong economy may well have been significant predictors because they influenced levels of government trust. Moreover, in cross-sectional analyses, positive economic perceptions go hand in hand with inparty status due to rationalization of economic perceptions (Bisgaard 2015). For this reason, inparty and economic variables would drop out in an over-time model including variations over time in government trust.

To evaluate this explanation, in Table 2 we used change over time in Trust in Government as our dependent variable, with changes over time in inparty and outparty status as well as economic perceptions included as predictors. In contrast to our Table 1 models, when

predicting Trust in Government, the variables capturing real or perceived economic conditions are statistically significant and, with one exception, signed as expected. As an individual's views of their own or the national economic situation deteriorates/improves, they are less/more likely to trust government. The one exception is that of income which, just as in our analysis above, is not signed as expected. Those who saw their income increase over this period actually lowered their trust in government. Similarly, the effect of inparty and outparty status is clear and pronounced in Table 2. Those who change from being a co-partisan of the president to not being a co-partisan of the president express systematically lower levels of trust in government, and those who change in the opposite direction, from outparty to inparty partisan, demonstrate an increase in government trust. Because previous analyses of the impact of inparty/outparty status have not included government trust in the same model, this is the most logical explanation. The impacts of inparty/outparty status and of economic change are largely indirect, by means of their effects on government trust.

A potential problem with interpreting even the relationships in Table 2 as indicative of indirect effects of the economy through government trust is that perceptions of both personal and national economic change are themselves a function of inparty and outparty status (Mutz 2021a). Even without actual economic change, new co-partisans of the president will come to view their personal and national economic conditions more favorably, and out-partisans will come to view both national and personal finances more negatively. This occurs due to well-documented motivated reasoning in perceptions of the economy (Johnston 2013).

Nonetheless, these results help clarify how and why past work has identified perceptions of economic performance and co-partisanship with the president as being central to support for global engagement. As we have shown, once we control for the effects of changes in support for

global engagement that flow through changes in government trust, the impact of economic perceptions is negligible. This difference in interpretation is important because trust in US government has been steadily declining since the 1960s (Pew Research Center 2023), even though the economy has moved in both positive and negative directions over time.

Table 2. *Drivers of change in trust in government, 2016-2022*

	Trust in government	
	Coeff.	t stat.
Nat'l econ doing well	0.127***	15.23
Personal financial situation good	0.043***	5.31
Unemployed	0.105*	2.01
Income	-0.024***	-3.43
Outgroup resentment	-0.012	-1.72
Social trust	0.095***	13.49
Racial attitudes	0.000	0.01
Inparty	0.384***	11.69
Outparty	-0.197***	-6.11
Wave 1 (Oct 2016)	0.000	.
Wave 2 (Aug 2017)	-0.135***	-3.98
Wave 3 (Oct 2018)	-0.069*	-2.10
Wave 4 (June 2019)	-0.157***	-4.74
Wave 5 (Feb 2020)	-0.138***	-4.15
Wave 6 (Oct 2020)	0.083*	2.39
Wave 7 (Apr 2021)	0.127***	3.74
Wave 8 (Oct 2022)	0.162***	4.54
Constant	2.072***	27.50
sigma_e	1.048	
sigma_u	1.342	
rho	0.621	
Observations(n)	24108	
Individuals(n)	5881	

Note Coefficients represent the effects of one standard deviation of residualized change in each independent variable in terms of standard deviations of change in support for international engagement.

* p<0.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

We turn next to our hypotheses about heterogeneity in what drives support for internationalism. We hypothesized that the effect of changes in outgroup resentment and in racial attitudes would be especially pronounced among white respondents, and less so among non-

whites. This is consistent with our argument about the tendency for minorities to consider race through more of an international lens than whites. In Figure 1, we show results from an analysis using the same basic model as in Table 1, Model 1, but we allow all coefficients to vary between whites and non-whites by including interactions between each time-varying variable and a dummy for white/non-white. The full table of results can be seen in Appendix D, Table D1.

As shown in Figure 1, our hypotheses were largely borne out. All of the time-varying economic variables had indistinguishable coefficients in both subgroups, as did Trust in Government and Social Trust. But change over time in the two indicators involving attitudes toward domestic outgroups were systematically different in how they affected levels of internationalism among whites and non-whites. Change over time in support for helping domestic racial minorities was a stronger positive predictor of changes in levels of internationalism among whites than among non-whites. In addition, increasing/decreasing levels of Outgroup Resentment were significant negative predictors of Support for Global Engagement among whites, but not among minorities.

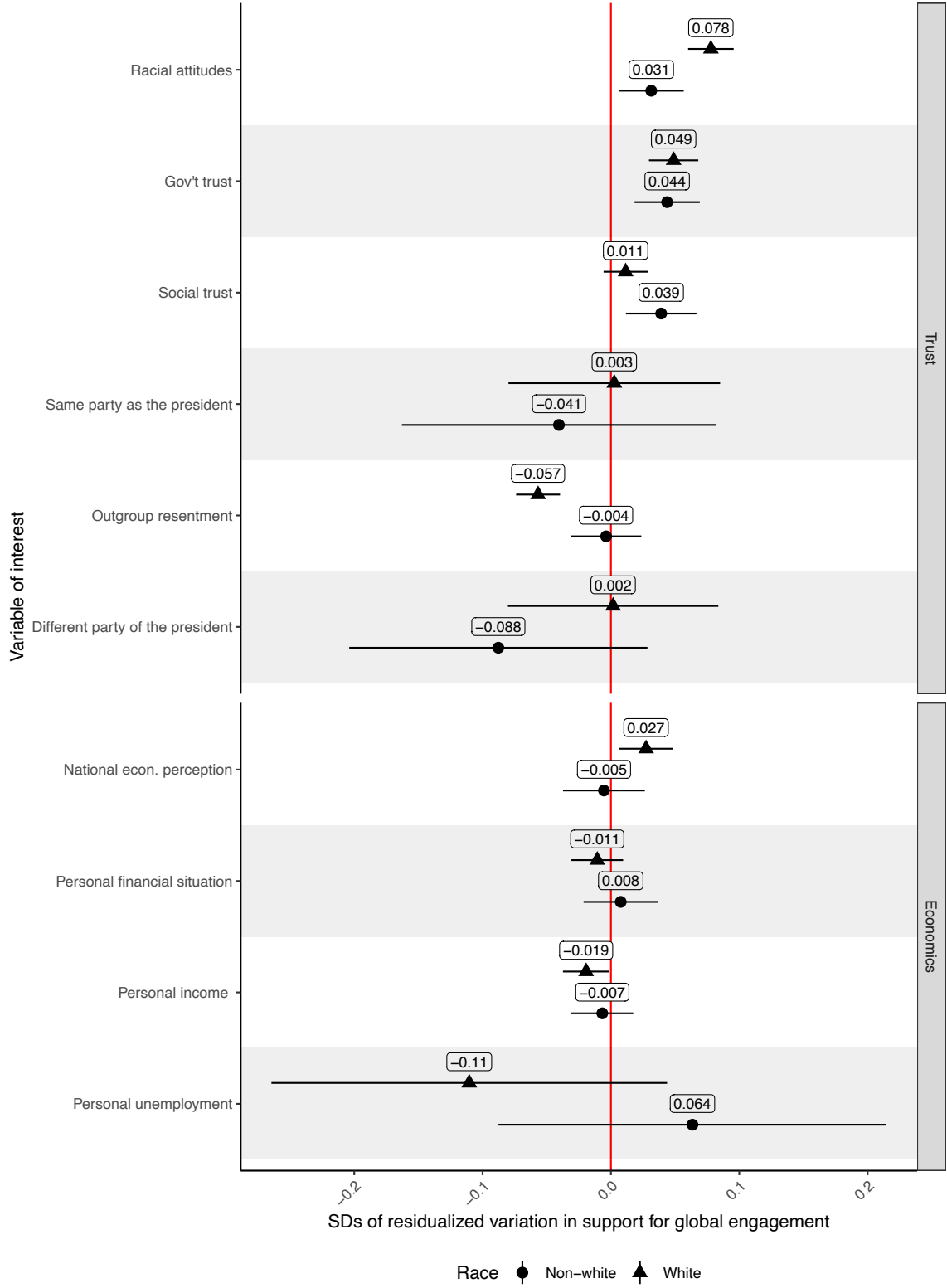


Figure 1. Effects of one standard deviation of residualized change in each independent variable in terms of standard deviations of residualized change in support for international engagement by minority status.

Further Analyses

To establish the robustness of these findings, we address two possible reasons one might question these panel-based results. One pertains to the symmetry or lack thereof in our findings, and a second involves whether our results are anomalous for some reason related to the advent of COVID19 during this period.

Symmetry among increasers and decreasers. Implicitly, panel analyses suggest that increases in a variable cause one direction of influence on the dependent variable, while decreases produces influences in the opposing direction. Nonetheless, the significant relationships we have observed between these two forms of change over time do not guarantee that this is the case. Are the effects of government trust symmetric such that a decrease in government trust is just as influential in lowering support for global engagement than an increase in government trust is in increasing support for global engagement? A general negativity bias supports the plausibility of asymmetry in this case, but cross-sectional analyses cannot distinguish between associations that are or are not symmetric when looking at change over time.

To investigate these possibilities, we re-specified our fixed effects model in terms of first differences in the main independent variables within individuals across waves (see Allison 2019 for details on this technique). We decompose the variation in all of our trust and outgroup sentiment variables creating two new variables for each measure. The first new variable records any positive changes in trust or outgroup sentiment but is zero otherwise, while the second records the absolute value of any negative changes in trust or outgroup sentiment but is zero otherwise. We then re-estimate our main model, again including wave fixed effects. The coefficients in Appendix E, Table E1 on our decomposed variables of interest are generally of

similar magnitude, suggesting a relatively symmetric effect across increases and decreases in most of the independent variables we analyzed. In the case of social trust and outgroup sentiment, the coefficients on increases in these variables are statistically significant but the coefficients on decreases in these variables are not. Still, a test of their equivalence fails to reject the null hypothesis of no difference between the positive change and negative change coefficients for both these variables and for our trust and outgroup sentiment variables. These results suggest that to the same extent that declining trust can cause greater isolationism, increasing trust can produce greater internationalism.

Accounting for the COVID Pandemic. The COVID pandemic also had potential implications for both trust in government and support for global engagement. The hypothesized direction of the pandemic's effects on these attitudes is not clear, however. On the one hand, some have argued that COVID made a strong case for international cooperation by making it clear that some problems cannot be addressed by unilateral action alone, since diseases easily cross international borders. On the other hand, the pandemic may also have provided evidence to some that international engagement is fraught with potential perils, stimulating demands to turn inward and withdraw from the world. To account for either possibility, we first analyzed the wave coefficient corresponding to the wave immediately after the onset of COVID in wave 6 (October 2020). Since each wave coefficient is being compared to the wave 1 baseline, what Table 1 suggests is that this coefficient remained almost exactly the same as it had since the change from wave 1 to wave 2, suggesting that the pandemic did not induce any unusual across-the-board increases or decreases in average levels of support for international engagement.

Plausible rival explanations. Given the strengths of individual-level two-way fixed effects analyses, the relationships that we have documented between change over time in various

kinds of trust and change over time in support for international engagement are unlikely to be spurious. The remaining threat to a causal interpretation would be an independent variable that was inconsistently predictive from one wave to the next. Although we have found no such evidence and have no theoretical reason to predict this, it cannot be ruled out. Nonetheless, this panel evidence provides a much stronger basis for causal inference than previous observational analyses. Trust of various kinds is overall a much stronger predictor of support for international engagement than fluctuations in economic perceptions, unemployment or personal financial status.

Given that we have evaluated simultaneous change in our independent variables relative to change in support for international engagement, reverse causation remains a possibility. However, a lagged model makes little sense in a context in which one would expect more or less simultaneous change in both independent and dependent variables. We know of no theory predicting that changing levels of internationalism should drive trust in other people, trust in government, or that internationalism should alter domestic racial attitudes. But it remains a possibility.

Domestic outgroup resentment, on the other hand, could be a function of seeing international threats that psychologically spill over into whites' distrust of those who look different from themselves, i.e., potential foreigners. For example, during COVID, anti-Asian sentiment rose within the US, even though Asian-Americans had no obvious link to COVID (Ng 2021). It is also worth noting that our measures of outgroup resentment dealt strictly with intergroup attitudes among whites, Blacks and Hispanics. For this reason, COVID and change over time in anti-Asian sentiment was unlikely to be responsible for the observed relationship between changes over time in outgroup resentment and changes in support for international

engagement. One remaining possibility is that these views spilled over into a more generalized xenophobia. However, our outgroup resentment measures show no such over-time pattern of increase.

Discussion and Conclusion

Foreign policy experts and policymakers have voiced concerns that the American public has become less supportive of international engagement. Whether or not this remains true in the short or long term, it is essential to understand *why* support for global engagement increases and decreases over time among the American public. Traditionally, scholars have suggested that this is largely an economic consideration. International commitments take time, energy and monetary resources away from domestic issues. Therefore, international engagement will be viewed as a luxury good, something a country should engage in only when times are good, and there are no compelling domestic needs to be attended to. Of course, even in the best of times, there are always some domestic concerns that need attention. Nonetheless, we find only limited evidence that perceptions of one's personal financial situation or perceptions of national economic conditions matter to levels of support or opposition to international involvement. Given that within-person analyses provide an exceptionally powerful test of this relationship, this is especially surprising.

Because the world beyond one's national borders seems highly uncertain and outside the control of most Americans, trust levels become essential to support for global engagement. We develop a theory based on trust—in generalized others, in government, and in those of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Using panel data, we show that when individuals express increased trust in others or in their government, they also increase their support for global

engagement. Similarly, when an individual's trust declines, so too does his or her support for global engagement.

While we find less evidence for the conventional wisdom, we provide suggestive evidence of an indirect role for both co-partisanship with the president and perceptions of economic performance. Both of these factors have direct implications for trust in government and so may be indirect drivers of support for global engagement. Our argument and evidence thus help to unite heretofore disparate explanations for changes in isolationist sentiment focused on co-partisanship with the president (Urbatsch 2010), economic performance, cynicism (Brewer and Steenbergen 2002) and ethnocentrism.

Notably, our measures of outgroup resentment are based on domestic racial and ethnic groups. As people's resentment toward domestic outgroups increases or decreases, so too does support for global engagement. This finding highlights how the degree of internal racial and ethnic conflict influences people's desire to cooperate with those beyond their national boundaries. Most out-countries are also quite different in race, ethnicity and way of life, thus leading them to be similarly categorized as "others." Domestic racism and xenophobia are variants of this same impulse. To further confirm this mechanism of influence, we tested whether when partisans transition from being in-partisans to becoming out-partisans, the impact of outgroup resentment on internationalism also increases. As shown in Table 1, changes in outgroup resentment do, indeed, become more relevant when a person is no longer "in control" as part of the inparty. This finding adds further support to our theory suggesting that vacillations in trust of various kinds facilitate support for global engagement. When people do not trust, they feel a need for protection and to forsake international involvements as a means of feeling more in control.

Declines in government trust implicate not just changing support for domestic policy initiatives, but foreign policy initiatives as well (Baum and Potter 2019). Importantly, this same dynamic, one in which trust in government plays a central role, also has been observed in support for domestic policies. For example, as trust in government declines, so does support for redistributive programs, such as welfare and food stamps, as well as race-targeted programs (Hetherington 2004). When trust is low, people essentially do not trust government to carry out major policies, especially if they think such policies could divert resources from their ingroups (Hetherington 2004; Hetherington and Rudolph 2015).

Our findings also have implications for theories of cooperation and compliance in international relations. While IR scholars have studied how trust and mistrust *between* states affects key results in benchmark models of cooperation and discord in international affairs (Kydd 2007), less is known about how trust *within* states might similarly affect those outcomes. Our work suggests that trust among members of the domestic public may condition the level of cooperation that potential international partners can expect from the United States. Past work on the form of international engagement chosen by leaders with a skeptical public has focused on principal agent problems and the credible signal that multilateralism might send about the quality of that engagement (Milner 2006). Our work suggests a simpler explanation: leaders with distrustful publics may opt for multilateralism to obscure their foreign policy initiatives, not to make those initiatives more legitimate in the eyes of skeptical publics (Dreher et al 2022).

Effects on trust that occur by virtue of changes in the party in power can be assumed to fluctuate regularly as the party of the president changes. But when elections are won by increasingly small margins, or the results are counter to the popular vote, the proportion of outgroup partisans naturally increases. Two recent US presidential elections were won without

the popular vote. This means that the majority of Americans were disinclined to trust government. The four remaining recent elections were decided by less than 5 percentage points in the popular vote. Close elections should discourage trust in government overall; lower levels of trust, in turn, make support for international engagement more difficult.

Perhaps most importantly, our findings shed light on multiple reasons for the contemporary breakdown in the foreign policy consensus. Even during the short time span of this single panel study, each and every one of these significant influences on support for global engagement changed in the direction predicting less support for international engagement. Although these changes were relatively small for each individual predictor, when combined they accounted for around 12% of a standard deviation in the change in support for international engagement.

If we consider long-term impacts, the implications of our findings become far greater. Trend data are sparse for measures of outgroup attitudes, but they are available for the other major predictors of internationalism in this study. Government trust has been in decline for many decades. According to the Pew Research Center, the percentage of Americans who say they trust the government to do what is right “just about always” or “most of the time” has declined from 73 percent in 1958 to only 24 percent in 2021. Declining trust in American government--regardless of who is in power--does not bode well for mass support for international involvement.

Likewise, according to the General Social Survey, social trust has declined precipitously, far more so in the US than in other liberal welfare states. For example, when asked in 1973 whether “most people can be trusted” or “you can't be too careful when dealing with others,” 46

percent of respondents indicated that they could trust most people. By 2018, this figure had dropped to 32 percent.

When combined with the results of our panel analyses, long-term trends in government trust and social trust all point in the same direction, toward a population that exhibits less support for internationalism. It is noteworthy that these domestic influences have no direct connection to foreign policy events. Instead, the country's *domestic* trust issues have international implications. Ironically, the old protectionist adage that we should get our own house in order before getting involved internationally has a ring of truth. Although getting our *economic* house in order appears less important than most would have anticipated, encouraging greater trust in government would clearly make a difference to levels of support for international involvement.

Our results also provide further evidence admonishing the “norm against noticing” the role of race in international relations (Freeman et al. 2022). Domestic racial resentment among whites and Americans' increasing tendency to distrust domestic others inhibits support for the liberal international order. Levels of support for global engagement would almost certainly be greater if these domestic problems were not as severe. As Crouch (2019: 2) suggests, the mass public views international involvement as risky and requires the reassurance provided by high levels of trust: “Even if they are prosperous in their own lives, they see a wider world of bewildering change, and yearn for the certainties that they, perhaps mistakenly, believe characterized an earlier one.”

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Appendix A: Panel Wave Details

Dates of fielding period for surveys, and sample size per wave:

- Wave 1: October 14-31, 2016 (n=3214)
- Wave 2: July 14-August 1, 2017 (n=3152)
- Wave 3: October 10-Nov. 4, 2018 (n=3202)
- Wave 4: June 7-July 5, 2019 (n=3419)
- Wave 5: Feb. 12-March 30, 2020 (n=3502)
- Wave 6: Oct. 6-30, 2020 (n=3053)
- Wave 7: April 6- May 17, 2021 (n=3058)
- Wave 8: Oct. 12-Nov. 7, 2022 (n=4357)

Appendix B: Survey Questions

INDEX OF INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT: 5-point agree-disagree scale recoded so that high=more internationalist

- The U.S. needs to play an active role in solving conflicts around the world. (AGREE)
- The U.S. government should just try to take care of the well-being of Americans and not get involved with other nations. (DISAGREE)
- It is essential for the United States to work with other nations to solve problems, such as overpopulation, hunger, and pollution. (AGREE)
- It will be best for the future of the country if we stay out of world affairs. (DISAGREE)
- The United States has a responsibility to play the role of “world policeman,” that is, to fight violations of international law and aggression wherever they occur. (AGREE)

INDEX OF GOVERNMENT TRUST

- How often can you trust the federal government in Washington to do what is right?
[Always, Most of the time, About half the time, Some of the time, Never]
- Would you say the government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all the people? [Run by a few big interests, For the benefit of all the people]
- Do you think that people in government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it? [Waste a lot, Waste some, Don't waste very much]
- How many of the people running the government are corrupt?
[All, Most, About half, A few, None]

INDEX OF SOCIAL TRUST

- Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people? [Most are trustworthy, Can't be too careful]
- Do you think most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance, or would they try to be fair? [Would take advantage, Try to be fair]
- Would you say that most of the time people try to be helpful, or that they are mostly just looking out for themselves? [Try to be helpful, Look out for themselves]

OUTGROUP RESENTMENT

How much discrimination is there in the US against ...

...Blacks

...Hispanics

...Whites

Scored relative to respondent's own racial group. For example, for whites, *Outgroup Resentment* is the difference between how much Whites saw themselves as discriminated against relative to perceived discrimination against Blacks and Hispanics on average. For Blacks, *Outgroup Resentment* is the difference between how much Blacks saw themselves as discriminated against relative to perceived discrimination against Whites and Hispanics on average. Since a few multi-racial individuals did not fall neatly into specific ingroups and outgroups, they were assigned values based on the extent to which the dominant ingroup (Whites) was perceived to be discriminated against more than Blacks.

Appendix C: Measurement Quality

I. Internal Consistency

Cronbach's alpha for Support for International Engagement Index by wave

Wave	Cronbach's alpha
1	0.74
2	0.74
3	0.76
4	0.76
5	0.75
6	0.78
7	0.81
8	0.77

Note: Dropping any one survey item in the index does not increase the reliability of the index within any wave.

II. Separating Stability from Reliability Over Time

Heise Reliabilities for International Engagement Index:

Waves 1-3: .72

Waves 3-5: .72

Waves 6-8: .77

Average across all waves: .74

Appendix D: Table Corresponding to Figure 1 Results

Table D1. *Drivers of Change in Support for International Engagement, 2016-2022 by white versus minority status.*

	(1)		(1)	
	International engagement		International engagement	
	White respondents		Non-white respondents	
	Coeff.	t stat.	Coeff.	t stat.
Nat'l econ doing well	0.027**	2.58	-0.033	-1.69
Personal financial situation good	-0.011	-1.04	0.018	1.02
Unemployed	-0.110	-1.40	0.174	1.58
Income	-0.019*	-2.09	0.013	0.82
Outgroup resentment	-0.057***	-6.50	0.053**	3.21
Trust in government	0.049***	4.98	-0.005	-0.31
Social trust	0.011	1.31	0.028	1.68
Racial attitudes	0.078***	8.59	-0.046**	-2.94
Inparty	0.003	0.06	-0.043	-0.57
Outparty	0.002	0.04	-0.089	-1.23
Wave 1 (Oct 2016)	Ref.	–	Ref.	–
Wave 2 (Aug 2017)	0.191***	4.54	-0.058	-0.70
Wave 3 (Oct 2018)	0.326***	7.95	-0.040	-0.51
Wave 4 (June 2019)	0.282***	6.86	-0.167*	-2.09
Wave 5 (Feb 2020)	0.259***	6.28	-0.168*	-2.09
Wave 6 (Oct 2020)	0.252***	5.90	-0.103	-1.23
Wave 7 (Apr 2021)	0.086*	2.05	-0.043	-0.53
Wave 8 (Oct 2022)	0.086*	1.96	-0.212*	-2.51
Constant	4.718***	57.65		
sigma_e	1.103			
sigma_u	1.610			
rho	0.681			
Observations(n)	24096			
Individuals(n)	5880			

Note: We interact a indicator variable that records whether the respondent is white or not with every variable in the model. The left side displays the main effect of each variable when the respondent is white. The right side represents the additional effect of the variable when the respondent is non-white. Coefficients represent the effects of one standard deviation of residualized change in each independent variable in terms of standard deviations of change in support for international engagement.

* p<0.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

Appendix E: Additional Results

Table E1. Tests of Asymmetric Effects from Increases and Decreases in Predictors

	(1)	
	International engagement	
	Coeff.	t stat.
International engagement		
Nat'l econ doing well (Increase)	-0.004	-0.22
Nat'l econ doing well (Decrease)	-0.040**	-2.91
Personal financial situation good (Increase)	-0.006	-0.41
Personal financial situation good (Decrease)	0.035*	2.47
Unemployment	0.001	0.02
Income (Increase)	-0.030*	-2.39
Income (Decrease)	-0.011	-0.70
Trust in government (Increase)	0.044***	3.49
Trust in government (Decrease)	-0.033*	-2.39
Social trust (Increase)	0.026*	2.10
Social trust (Decrease)	-0.013	-1.08
Racial attitudes (Increase)	0.057***	3.99
Racial attitudes(Decrease)	-0.048***	-3.54
Outgroup resentment (Increase)	-0.056***	-3.89
Outgroup resentment (Decrease)	0.024	1.72
Observations	17312.000	
Gov't trust (p-value on test of equiv.)	0.600	
Personal financial situation (p-value on test of equiv.)	0.214	
Income (p-value on test of equiv.)	0.053	
Outgroup resentment (p-value on test of equiv.)	0.168	
Social trust (p-value on test of equiv.)	0.491	
Racial attitudes (p-value on test of equiv.)	0.675	

Note: Analyses based on procedures described in Allison (2019).